

# Ireland's Well-Being Framework: Consultation Report

COUNCIL REPORT

No.155 July 2021



NESD

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Eacnamaíoch agus Shóisialta  
National Economic & Social Council

An Oifig Náisiúnta um Fhorbairt Eacnamaíoch agus Shóisialta  
National Economic & Social Development Office NESDO

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# Acknowledgements

The Council would like to sincerely express its gratitude to the members of the Stakeholder and Expert Group for the time and expertise that they have contributed to this project.

# Acronyms

AIC	Actual Individual Consumption	NESC	National Economic and Social Council
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
BES	Il Benessere Equo e Sostenibile (Italian measure of equitable and sustainable well-being)	NPF	National Planning Framework
BOBF	Better Outcome Better Futures	NSO	National Strategic Outcomes
CSO	Central Statistics Office	NSS	National Spatial Strategy
CYPSCs	Children and Young People's Services Committees	NWI	National Welfare Index
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	OECD	Organisational for Economic Co-operation and Development
EU	European Union	ONS	Office of National Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	PPIW	Public Policy Institute for Wales
GNI	Gross National Income	PPN	Public Participation Networks
GSS	General Social Survey	RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
HI	Healthy Ireland	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
HSE	Health Service Executive	SEEA EA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting - Ecosystem Accounting
IDWG	Inter-Departmental Working Group	SEED	Social, Economic, Environment and Democratic
INSEE	Institut de la Statistique et des Études Économiques (French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies)	SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
IGEES	Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service	SJI	Social Justice Ireland
INCASE	Irish Natural Capital Accounting for Sustainable Environments	SOAs	Single Outcome Agreements
ISTAT	Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Italian National Institute of Statistics)	TILDA	The Irish Longitudinal Study on Aging
LCDCs	Local Community Development Committees	UCC	University College Cork
LSF	Living Standards Framework	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NCS	National Childcare Scheme	QUB	Queen's University Belfast
NDP	National Development Plan	UN	United Nations
		VNR	Voluntary National Review
		WISE	Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity



# Executive Summary

The commitment in the 2020 Programme for Government has put Ireland on a journey towards the development of a well-being framework.

Momentum exists to develop alternative measures of societal progress because of the limits, in economic, social and environmental terms, of existing approaches. These limits are recognised within the Irish policy making system. In Ireland, there are a range of different types of well-being initiatives. These provide an important resource. The work of the OECD and a number of countries, including New Zealand, also provide valuable insights.

## Case for Well-Being Framework in Ireland

The Council believe that there is a compelling case for developing a well-being framework in Ireland and for the centrality of consultation to this work.

NESC consultation and research, supported by a Stakeholder and Expert Group, finds a strong consensus that Ireland can and should embrace a well-being framework as a fresh means of setting priorities, developing policy and allocating resources.

*A well-being framework can help to create a shared vision which mobilises action by linking policy action and review to the 'measured' lived experience of citizens.*

A well-being framework is a means of articulating a shared vision or ambitious idea about the future that people can relate to and support. It recognises the need to view progress towards that shared vision through the lens of the lived experience of citizens. It is an opportunity to bring about transformation in a fairer and more equitable manner.

Well-being frameworks are designed to orientate work within the policy system towards achieving a shared vision and bringing about improvements in individuals lived experience. In practice, well-being frameworks do so by focusing on trade-offs and outcomes, often new outcomes which have not been systematically included in decision-making in the past such as social connections, quality of place and a sense of belonging or isolation.

A well-being framework, over time, can create an important means of reaching out to and engaging with organisations and citizens on their assessment of their progress, obstacles and lessons learned. By doing so a well-being framework can help reduce the sense of anxiety and tension about change and progress.

It has the potential to improve scrutiny and oversight as it requires policymakers to state clearly what they understand well-being to be and how they will monitor improvements or declines in it over time. This, in turn, enables people to scrutinise those choices and propose alternatives, as well as giving people a framework in which they can state their preferences in systematic ways across a range of outcomes.

The focus on consultation can also help ensure a just transition which means that people, particularly those most adversely affected, are treated fairly as Ireland becomes a low-carbon society.

## Developing Indicators

There is strong support for practical action to deliver tangible early results in designing a framework. The Inter-departmental Working Group, which included the CSO and NESC, defined 11 dimensions with an associated set of wellbeing indicators.

*The CSO have developed a demonstration dashboard to communicate how the first interactive well-being framework will look and function.*

The NESC Consultation, which included 450 survey responses, shaped this work in a number of ways. It identified:

- That all 11 of the well-being dimensions in the OECD framework resonate strongly in Ireland;
- Specific issues and concerns of Irish citizens, including culture, language and heritage; access to services and amenities; social connections; and access to green space and nature;
- The importance of giving adequate weighting to the future, in particular environmental sustainability;
- The need for clear and transparent criteria for selecting indicators;
- The need for better data on children and young people's well-being in the final indicator set; and,
- The need for enhanced data sources to help future consideration of trade-offs.

### Developing a Vision

The well-being framework creates an opportunity to focus on developing and discussing an overarching vision.

*The vision of the Ireland which people want focuses strongly on an overarching commitment to equality and inclusion, participation and to protecting the environment and biodiversity.*

The more consultative and participative route, which underpins the well-being work, builds upon the assumption that policy affects everyone and therefore everyone should have a say in how those policies are developed.

The consultation revealed three overarching and inter-linked priorities: equity, agency and sustainability.

Equity is reflective of a desire to ensure that a 'spirit of equity' or 'social friendship' is more evident in Ireland. Survey respondents frequently linked equality with ensuring societal wellbeing: a fair and equitable society is needed to ensure citizens' wellbeing and to enable the taking of collective decisions in the common interest.

Agency is concerned with meaningful engagement of citizens in identifying priorities. The consultation and research—in Ireland and internationally—illustrated that well-being is complex, multi-faceted and both personal and societal, and is therefore best understood through deliberative and deep dialogue with citizens. Well-being frameworks that do not sufficiently engage with citizens risk becoming a technocratic exercise with limited public buy-in and limited capacity to create social capital.

Sustainability emerged as a key priority in the consultation, both among members of the stakeholder and expert group and in the wider survey. Key concerns related to identifying and resolving potential trade-offs between dimensions, in particular short-term economic wellbeing (according to some measures) and environmental sustainability.

### Guidance for a transformative approach to well-being

Developing a well-being framework and a dashboard is the first phase of work. An initial review of Irish and international experience of a diverse range and different types of well-being initiatives provides guidance for future phases of work.

*At this point, the view that well-being can be transformative is largely aspirational. However, it is an aspiration that is widely held. As such the possibility for the work on well-being to be transformative is in our hands.*

To fully capture the potential of work on a well-being framework in Ireland four lines of action are recommended.

First, understand how well-being frameworks support transformational change. A key concern is how the well-being framework actually changes outcomes. To date, there is not strong evidence that links well-being indicators to outcomes. NESC work suggests the importance of further research which would explore in more depth successful

experiences with outcomes approaches in Ireland and examine how other countries are addressing and improving citizens' concerns related to equity, agency and sustainability.

NESC work in this area would be closely co-ordinated with ongoing work with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. It is also proposed to engage with the Embassy network to help identify promising budgetary and administrative practices in selected countries and multilateral organisations.

Second, foster a deeper understanding of equity. The promise of a well-being framework is that work on improving overarching priorities, such as equity would consider how equity is reflected in, and impacted by, inputs and actions in all 11 domains.

NESC will undertake work to support a deeper understanding of the factors that foster a 'spirit of equity' in Ireland. This would focus on how specific cohorts consistently experience disadvantage and how to break the pattern of continuing and inter-generational inequity.

Third, develop processes and institutions to support agency. A 'Public Conversation' involving a multi-step intensive consultation with different modes of deliberation and engagement tailored to the needs of different stakeholders is required. The Council believe that this needs to be led by the Department of An Taoiseach and the IDWG. The Council and the Secretariat and members of the Stakeholder and Expert Group should be seen as a resource which can support aspects of this work.

The Council recommends that as further consideration is given to the institutional features of the well-being framework that the role of the National Economic Dialogue (NED) is broadened. It also recommends giving consideration to the establishment of a Standing advisory Group on Well-Being Measurement and Monitoring.

Fourth, improve data and reporting on sustainability. In particular the importance of environmental sustainability to current and future generations is a key concern. There is a need for a 'national map of ecosystem extent and condition', and there are data gaps on biodiversity outside of protected areas and in relation to the condition of ecosystems. NESC work (to be completed in 2022) will seek to provide advice on natural capital (nature) accounting frameworks.

## Chapter 1

# Developing a Well-Being Framework for Ireland

*A well-being framework can help to create a shared vision which mobilises action by linking policy action and review to the ‘measured’ lived experience of citizens.*

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the background to NESC consultative work on the development of Ireland’s well-being framework, its origins in the 2020 Programme for Government and the potential endpoint of a well-being framework that contributes to improved well-being outcomes in Ireland.

The Council is conscious that Governments, in Ireland and elsewhere, has a long history of trying to advance the welfare of the people and applies very large resources to the task. In addition, the issues of what constitutes public welfare, how to achieve it, what to spend resources on are a constant topic of public debate, including within and among public bodies, NGOs, research institutes, and of course among politicians and in the media.

The Council also recognise that while economic matters have undoubtedly been debated more than social and environmental ones, that this is partly because people’s incomes and income prospects, and the State’s taxes, spending and services, determine so much of what they experience in daily life—and this will continue to be the case. It is also important to state that while national discourse and measures of progress may have been dominated by economic indicators that those working in other areas, such as education or health, are heavily focused on sector-specific indicators.

This opening chapter in the report sets out the reasons why a well-being framework should be developed in Ireland. It begins by highlighting the momentum that now exists to develop alternative measures of societal progress. It outlines the Programme for Government 2020 commitment to well-being and its request to NESC.

The chapter concludes by setting out the Council’s understanding of well-being—summarised in the opening quotation—and why the Council believe that work on well-being can be fundamental to how we as a society re-imagine Ireland’s future.

The remainder of the report is then structured in three parts.

**Part One** represents the first steps on the journey to shape the development of a well-being framework. It focuses on two key areas:

- Chapter 2: Developing Indicators for Ireland’s Well-Being Framework; and
- Chapter 3: First steps towards a Vision for Ireland’s Well-Being Work.

**Part Two** provides guidance based on an initial review of Irish and international work. Chapter 4 offers guidance around four issues:

- 4.1: Developing and Using High-Level Priorities;
- 4.2: Regular Reporting and Monitoring;
- 4.3: Deeper and Wider Collaboration; and,
- 4.4: Linking Well-Being into Policy Outcomes.

**Part Three** concludes by outlining the next steps that can be taken to develop Ireland’s well-being framework to its full potential.

## 1.2 Momentum for Alternative Measurement of Progress

There is growing and widespread recognition of the limits of existing approaches to the measurement of progress. The progress of countries has traditionally been measured using GDP—a measure of the value of goods and services produced by a country.

The measures have limits as economic measures. For example, Honohan (2021) has recently pointed out that Ireland's relative prosperity measured on the basis of Actual individual consumption (AIC) is substantially lower than on the basis of GDP or modified GNI\*. While Ireland's modified GNI\* was 9 per cent above the EU average in 2019, actual individual consumption (adjusted for consumer price differences) was 6 per cent below the EU (28) average and Ireland ranked twelfth within the EU (28).

The measures are also limited from a social or societal perspective. GDP is disconnected from living conditions and in particular distributional outcomes and inequality. This disconnect is evident in parts of our society and among specific cohorts where despite economic progress there is a strong sense of being left behind, stigmatised and being alienated from the policy process.

The measures also fail to adequately reflect the value of the environment or give sufficient indication of the sustainability of current output or income. It is accepted that current patterns of resource use and economic activity are putting huge pressure on the planet in a way that threatens the ability to meet future needs. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2020 highlights that the climate crisis is deepening at the same time as 'the planet's biodiversity is plunging, with a quarter of species facing extinction, many within decades' (UNDP, 2021: 3). In Ireland, over 90 per cent of Ireland's protected habitats are in 'bad or inadequate condition' (DCHG, 2017).

These weaknesses are recognised within the Irish policy making system, with the Department of Finance noting that ignoring them could drive activities which may have a negative impact on well-being in the long-term (Department of Finance, 2020).

In recognition of these limitations many countries have begun to look beyond economic indicators as measures progress. A key message of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, established in 2008 by the French Government, was the need for the "measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being." (Stiglitz *et al.*, 2009: 12). The report argued that a particular strength of adopting well-being measures is the potential to mobilise action across policy silos and bring a greater degree of coherence in policy design (*ibid.*: 206). Since then, over 160 well-being initiatives have been launched at international, national or sub-national level (Allin & Hand, 2016).

## 1.3 Irish Programme for Government Commitment to Well-Being

*The 2020 Programme for Government* announced the intention to create a set of well-being indicators for use in driving policy and evaluating outcomes. It highlighted the potential of the Covid-19 pandemic to increase poverty and inequality and the potential role of well-being measurement to ensure a fair and balanced recovery.

*We will develop a set of indicators to create a broader context for policymaking, to include: A set of wellbeing indices to create a well-rounded, holistic view of how our society is faring; and, A balanced scorecard for each area of public policy, focused on outcomes and the impact that those policies have on individuals and communities.*

*Once developed, we will ensure that it is utilised in a systematic way across government policy-making at local and national levels, in setting budgetary priorities, evaluating programmes and reporting progress*

Programme for Government 2020

The objective is to develop a multi-dimensional approach to understanding the impacts of public policy and, over time, to use a well-being framework as a complement to existing economic tools across policy-making, including setting budgetary priorities, evaluating programmes and reporting progress (IDWG, 2021).

The development of a well-being framework is being led by the Department of the Taoiseach and will be jointly sponsored by the Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform. The detailed work on developing the framework will be undertaken through a Departmental Working Group chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach.

The work of the Departmental Working Group will follow a phased and iterative approach (See Box 1.1).

### **Box 1.1: First Report on a new Well-being Framework for Ireland**

The development of new measures of well-being and progress is a commitment in the *Programme for Government—Our Shared Future*, in recognition that in order to achieve a well-rounded policy-making system there is a need to move beyond uniquely economic measures. The Government's first report on a new Well-being Framework for Ireland, which this consultation report is published alongside, captures the first phase of this work, and the start of progress towards this ambitious commitment.

The Well-being Framework is a cross-government initiative that, driven by a desire to do better by people, seeks to develop a multi-dimensional approach to understanding the impact of public policy on the lived experience of individuals.

The development of the Framework was based on a number of core principles: to build on extensive work already undertaken; be cohesive, understandable and impactful over time; pursue an iterative approach to allow for its evolution as its uses in the Irish context become clearer and more bespoke data becomes available; and generate buy-in from both policymakers and stakeholders.

The First Report covers the context of this work and the approach pursued. Capturing and building on considerable national work to date, it provides a Vision, Conceptual Framework and accompanying Dashboard of indicators for well-being in Ireland. It also examines its integration with policy making and a roadmap for future work.

There are a number of indicative stages or levels to this work. Firstly, the development of an overarching well-being framework and then employing the framework to report progress. Building on this is the utilisation of the framework to help set agendas and high-level priorities to inform efforts to improve the overall impact of public policy on people's lives; and using the framework over time to better understand complex policy challenges, including as part of the budgetary process, in order to inform, consider and examine the design, implementation and evaluation of more effective public policies and programmes.

Building on work already undertaken in the well-being space, in particular in Ireland, the first report seeks to join the dots, leverage and compliment a wide range of related national initiatives. It also seeks to draw out the considerable pertinent live policies, strategies and plans that align with key dimensions and aspects of the well-being Framework.

The report and related work puts many building blocks in place for future work, and outlines the next steps for progression including further consultation and engagement; integration with policy making; research promotion, and closing data gaps. This work will be conducted with a view to reporting back to Government, to inform future direction, workstreams, and permanent institutional structures.

The report notes, that in line with a recommendation in this NESC report, that a 'Public Conversation' will be kick-started with the launch of the CSO's dashboard in Autumn, which will be an interactive version based on the static dashboard contained in this Report. Full development and integration of the Well-being Framework will be an iterative process over a number of years.

The development of a well-being framework, including conceptual framework and accompanying dashboard of well-being indicators was the focus of work in Phase 1. Future phases will focus on the ambitious work of ensuring a well-being framework is integrated into policy-making.

A sub-group on consultation was convened by the NESC. This sub-group provided a vehicle for consultation with stakeholders, both through members of the Council representing different social partnership pillars, as well as external experts and interested parties. Box 1.2 provides an overview of the working methods.

The work of the sub-group has been carried out in close cooperation with the Department of the Taoiseach and with regular feedback into the Departmental Working Group. This feedback has shaped the work of the IDWG in a number of respects, and this is noted in the First Report of the IDWG.

#### **Box 1.2: NESC Consultation on Well-Being**

A Stakeholder and Expert Group was established to support the work. Appendix A provides an overview of the membership. The Stakeholder and Expert Group met four times. Minutes of the meetings are published on the nesc.ie website. Key activities and issues addressed by the Group included:

- Online seminar with OECD's Centre on Well-Being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE);
- Presentations from Department of the Taoiseach outlining the work of the Inter-Departmental Working Group;
- Presentation from the CSO on the potential functionality of a well-being Dashboard;
- Presentation from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on 'Strengthening the Budgetary Framework: A Well-being perspective on public policy'; and,
- Survey of members on the elements of the OECD framework and shaped the revision of the survey for use with a wider set of stakeholders.

The Secretariat carried out research in selected areas, given the time constraints. Twenty interviews and discussions were held with the following:

- Members of the Stakeholder and Expert Group;
- Experts beyond the Stakeholder and Expert Group;
- Departmental or sectoral experts, including the CSO;
- Local or regional actors, including within the PPN network and LCDCs;
- International experts; and,
- Country experts.

Consultation Survey: Following a pilot survey members discussed the design of the survey as well as stakeholder mapping. The survey was revised based upon the group feedback, it was agreed that the survey would target stakeholder organisations representing sectoral pillars and groups working with particular population groups.

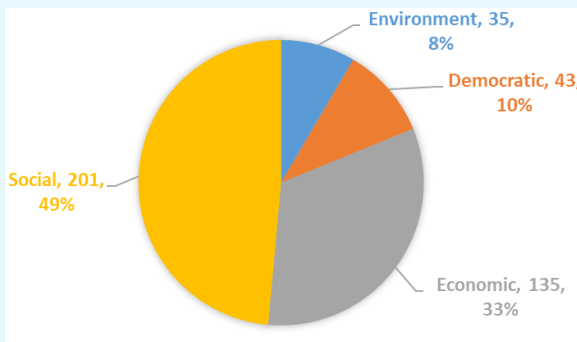


The survey, which was available in both English and Irish focused on defining well-being and well-being priorities. It was sent to 539 organisations: 414 organisations from across the social, economic, environment and democratic (SEED) pillars of sustainable development, and 125 organisations engaging with or representing population groups. Following the approach of Lightbody (2017: 6), organisations were identified based on their engagement with population groups based on age (youth and older people), disability, gender, ethnic group, faith, rural/regional and socio-economic group.

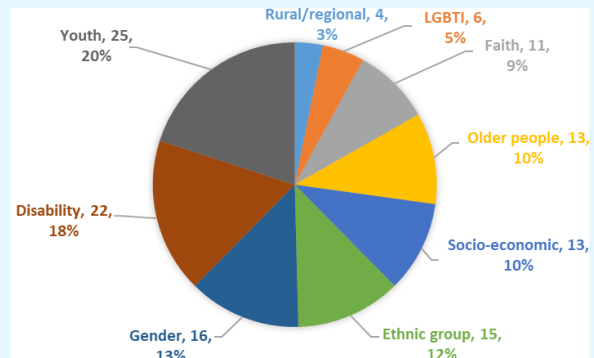
NESC website provides more details about the survey.

Survey responses indicated a spread of responses across the Social, Economic, Environment and Democratic (SEED) pillars. Only 13 per cent of overall responses were from organisations engaged with or representing population groups, but of the 61 responses from these groups there was a good spread across the different population categories.

The survey targeted 539 organisations, in the following categories:

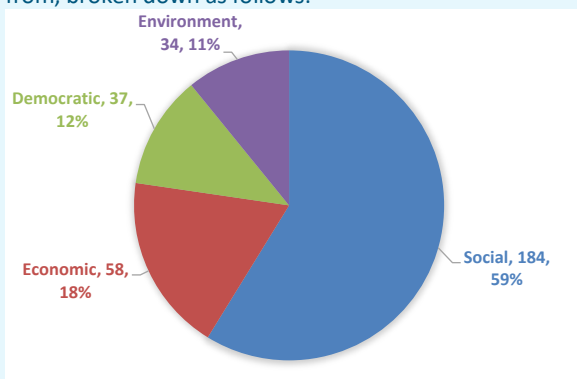


414 SEED organisations

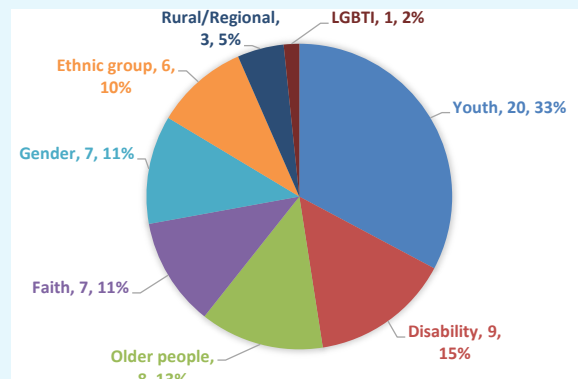


125 Population group organisations

There were a total of 451 responses to the survey. 374 responses indicated the organisation they received the survey from, broken down as follows:



313 SEED organisations



61 Population group organisations

## 1.4 Case for a Well-being Framework in Ireland

The Council believe that there is a compelling case for developing a well-being framework in Ireland and for the centrality of consultation to this work.

The Council argues that the case for developing well-being frameworks rests on four inter-connected points:

- A Well-being framework is based on a shared vision which mobilises action;

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- A Well-being framework views progress through the lived experience of citizens;

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- A well-being framework focuses on cross-departmental outcomes; and,

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- A well-being framework embeds external collaboration into policy.

The remainder of this section develops each of these points.

### 1.4.1 A well-being framework is based on a shared vision which mobilises action

A well-being framework is a means of articulating a shared vision about the type of society Ireland wants to be. The Consultation, and the international research, highlights that work on well-being should be underpinned by a vision for the type of society that could be created by work on well-being.

A vision is an ambitious idea about the future that people can relate to and support and, when tied to a series of supporting concrete actions, programmes or projects, it can galvanise action. This is important as, if a vision is bold yet achievable, it can help motivate people when fatigue may emerge about the measures asked of them, when timeframes are uncertain, and costs are crystalized.

A vision can provide hope by directing attention to opportunities for economic, educational and social progression. It can also provide a guide to inform short and medium-term decisions on restructuring Ireland's economy and society.

In 2020, the Council outlined such a vision:

*Ireland to become a resilient, sustainable, thriving net-zero economy, environment and society, using innovation and collective preparedness to shape the future we want to achieve.*

During the Covid-19 crisis our vulnerabilities have increased, or at least have become more visible. The pandemic crisis adds increasing weight to the Council's perspective—the need for a proactive and purposeful State to lead Ireland to a better economy, society and environment; and, the significant role of a deliberative and participative process to help us get there (NESC, 2020a, 2020b).

The Programme for Government sets a vision for:

*An Ireland for all ages, where the arts and culture thrive, the Irish language is nurtured and developed, and sport inspires us to lead healthier and better lives—an Ireland that is a welcoming place to all visitors, whether they are here on holiday, to learn, to seek refuge, or for business; an Ireland for people of all ages.*

The consultative work on well-being helps, in Chapter 3, to provide further insights on a shared vision for Ireland.

In addition, the consultation highlighted the importance of an ambitious and inclusive vision about the how Ireland should approach the work on well-being. The work on well-being was envisioned as having five characteristics Box 1.3. These were shared with the Inter-departmental Working Group.

Finally, in terms of vision an important theme raised in the consultation is the opportunity to work for an ‘island of well-being’ reflecting and taking account of the work taking place in both jurisdictions on the island. NESC is supporting the work of the Shared Island initiative,<sup>1</sup> and work to date suggests that there are significant opportunities for learning and collaboration across social, economic and environmental pillars. Well-being indicators in Northern Ireland have also been informed by the OECD framework providing potential scope to build on synergies. The work of WEAll Ireland—an all-island hub of the global Wellbeing Economy Alliance—was also noted.

### Box 1.3: Five Guiding Characteristics for Irish Work on Well-Being Framework

1. Comprehensive: This means looking beyond single-issue descriptors of well-being (such as individual health or reduction in percentage of people living in poverty).

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2. Holistic: This means reflecting the multi-dimensional, interconnected aspects of well-being. Multi-disciplinary, transdisciplinary and multi-sectoral understandings of what is meant by well-being should form the evidence base;

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3. Transformative & Future focused: This means using the well-being framework as an opportunity to analyse the causes of ‘ill-being’ and to critique and re-imagine our current systems and the deep ecological, economic, and societal linkages; and our intergenerational responsibilities.

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4. Reflexive: The best well-being framework embeds a reflexive process, including ongoing, engaged stakeholder reflection upon understandings and practice. It will be open to the reality that what is meant by ‘well-being’ will evolve over time.

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5. Impact & Action-Orientated: This means that the well-being framework will support work in specific priority areas.

#### 1.4.2 A well-being framework views progress through the lived experience of citizens

A well-being framework recognises the need to view progress towards a shared vision through the lens of the lived experience of citizens. It broadens the way progress is assessed, looking at it holistically across three broad areas: economic, social and environment; and, in a future-focused way by considering impacts on future generations. It also deepens the way progress is assessed by focusing detailed measures in each of the areas. In addition, at the heart of the measurement approach there is an explicit focus on inequality and distributional impacts.

Perhaps, more fundamentally, a well-being framework can help re-frame the role of data collection from one of primarily ensuring compliance (with ex-ante agreed targets) to one of driving innovation and learning about what worked, what changed and lessons learned. Data collection which is most valuable to well-being are measures that indicate progress (or otherwise) towards outcomes. Most organisations will be intrinsically motivated to collect and analyse this type of continuous improvement data. Finding ways to link this to wider sectoral, regional or national well-being frameworks should not add dramatically to their administrative burden.

#### 1.4.3 A well-being framework focuses on cross-departmental outcomes

Well-being frameworks are designed to help orientate work within the policy system to both support the vision and bring about improvements in lived experience.

In practice, well-being frameworks do so by focusing on outcomes, often new outcomes which have not been systematically included in decision-making in the past such as social connections, quality of place and sense of belonging or isolation. A focus on outcomes such as connections, belonging or loneliness, would be influenced by several

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.nesc.ie/work-programme/shared-island/>

Government departments and agencies, and the framework enables the explicit identification of different departments to collective outcomes.

The focus on outcomes which may emerge through the well-being work would not undermine the work already underway but complement it by potentially identifying new ways of approaching and addressing a wider range of issues that concern citizens.

The holistic nature of a well-being approach brings the trade-offs between different outcomes into sharper focus. A clear framework for well-being spells out the full range of outcomes that policymakers need to consider when designing and estimating the likely impact of a policy, and when evaluating its results. This can highlight synergies where policies may be mutually reinforcing, but also reveal conflicts where policy initiated in one part of government might affect the achievement of objectives elsewhere. In turn, this can improve the transparency with which well-being outcomes are prioritised across government.

A well-being framework can also provide a comprehensive means of ensuring the emergency responses take into consideration the impact of actions across a broader range of domains and cohorts or individuals.

#### 1.4.4 A well-being framework embeds external collaboration into policy

Outcomes that reflect citizens' priorities and lived experiences are identified with citizens, based on close and extensive engagement with stakeholders, experts and citizens. The nature of this engagement varies. It can include large consultative exercises, in-depth work with experts and stakeholders; or assessment and monitoring processes.

Ideally, there is a strong emphasis on co-design and co-creation of solutions, reflecting that many of the challenges experienced by citizens involve solutions that are uncertain and dependent on context. Figuring out what works very often depends on getting people with expertise to begin working on solutions and on finding ways within the policy system to learn quickly from this and to consider how to help scale success. A well-being framework, over time, can create an important means of reaching out to and engaging with organisations and citizens in terms of their assessment of their progress, obstacles and lessons learned.

By doing so a well-being framework can help reduce the sense of anxiety and tension about change and progress. It can provide a basis for more communication about progress and progress at different levels—from micro level projects, to programmes and national policies and goals.

Focusing policy on well-being has the potential to improve scrutiny and oversight as it requires policymakers to state clearly what they understand well-being to be and how they will monitor improvements or declines in well-being over time. This, in turn, enables people to scrutinise those choices and propose alternatives, as well as giving people a framework in which they can state their preferences in systematic ways across a range of outcomes.

The focus on consultation can also help ensure a just transition which means that people, particularly those most adversely affected, are treated fairly in the creation of policies and projects to develop a low-carbon society.

## 1.5 Conclusions

A well-being framework can help to create a shared vision which mobilises action by linking policy action and review to the 'measured' lived experience of citizens. This can help create greater focus on outcomes within the policy system, on cross-cutting approaches and the role of collaboration earlier and more formally in all stages of the policy process, including oversight and review.

A key question considered by the NESC Council, and the Stakeholder and Expert Group, is how transformative this well-being framework can be. The international experience (Chapter 4), where much work on well-being is at an early stage does not provide definitive guidance. There are signs that the approach can be transformative, with the Scottish experience pointing to significant impacts for example in the area of tackling knife crime as a result of a more multi-dimensional approach.

In some respects Ireland may be further down the line in terms of work done on well-being. The first major report on well-being in Ireland was published by NESC in 2009, work on performance budgeting has been underway since 2012, and there are a range of different types of well-being initiatives across the policy system at national and local levels.

At this point the view that well-being can be transformative is largely aspirational. However, it is an aspiration that is widely held. As noted the work on well-being has emanated from the Programme for Government. Within the policy system work is being led by the Department of the Taoiseach and jointly sponsored by the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The work is being actively supported by the CSO, and as also noted there is a large range of work taking place across the policy system, in regions, communities and educational settings that will feed into the approach.

As such the possibility for the work on well-being to be transformative is in our hands. The vision which the work will strive towards is ambitious and transformative and the approach to achieving it is data-intensive, cross-cutting and collaborative. As such it may make progress slowly, at least at first, as these new ways of working are developed, used and revised.

# PART 1 First Steps on the Journey

## Chapter 2

# Developing Indicators for Ireland's Well-Being Framework

## 2.1 Introduction

The work by NESC, supported by the Stakeholder and Expert Group, focused on what was needed to ensure that work on a well-being framework for Ireland could begin as soon as possible.

The starting point was taken as the OECD Framework. Consultation work, first, examined how that approach works and how it might be refined. A strong message from that consultation was the holistic and intersecting nature of well-being, and that as such all 11 dimensions of the OECD framework are important. The benefit of a well-being approach was seen as that it can bring the multifaceted lens of these different dimensions together in an integrated way.

Second, the consultation focused on indicators and how they should be selected and enhanced. Third, the consultation examined the measurement of future capital. Fourth, the consultation process highlighted the importance of establishing processes, based on a number of key design principles, for stakeholder engagement.

## 2.2 Refining the OECD Framework

The Organisational for Economic Co-operation and Development Well-Being Framework is an appropriate starting point for the development of a well-being framework for Ireland.

The OECD framework comprises both objective and subjective aspects of current well-being outcomes and resources and risks for future well-being (related to stocks of natural capital, social capital, economic capital and human capital). The framework emphasises how outcomes are distributed in society as central to the measurement of well-being. This includes examining inequalities between groups, including horizontally (differences by gender, age, and level of educational attainment) and vertically (differences between the top and bottom of the distribution of outcomes for that indicator) for many of the individual indicators. The OECD uses a dashboard approach to represent data and indicators. (OECD, 2018, 2020).

The potential strengths of the OECD framework for Ireland, include its emphasis on both distribution and sustainability, the flexibility the dashboard approach offers in communicating and presenting results and the potential for international comparison as it is an approach to well-being most commonly seen at the national level. The dimensions reflect the multiple aspects of well-being and the benefit of a well-being approach that brings the multifaceted lens of these different dimensions together in an integrated way.

The initial phase for developing a well-being framework for Ireland focused on a whole-of-Government high-level framework that adapts the OECD framework into a bespoke framework for Ireland.

This involved identifying data sources and assessing the suitability and timeliness of the data, as well as identifying any significant data gaps that needed to be addressed; identifying an initial sense of the prioritisation of issues for the people of Ireland; increasing awareness and buy-in; and creating a roadmap for taking the work forward.

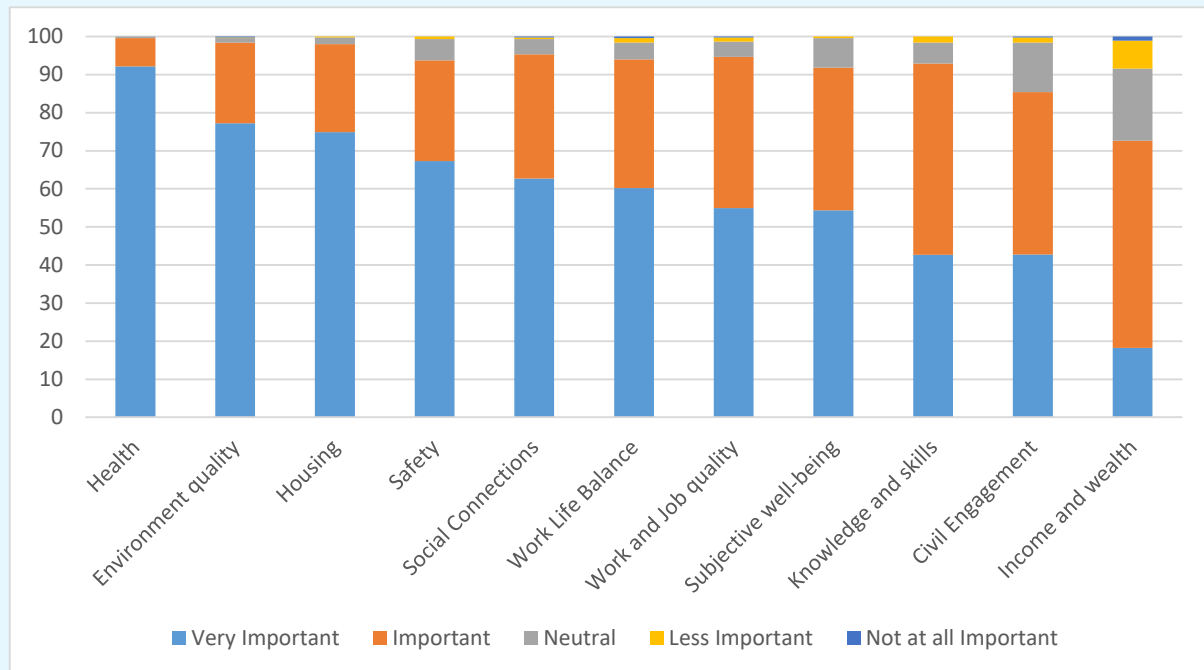
The consultative work identified support for an OECD informed approach as a starting point, in particular noting the strengths of taking a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to well-being and facilitating international benchmarking. The consultation also raised a number of limitations or areas to pay attention to and refine as part of the development of a well-being framework for Ireland. These included the importance of designing the framework for effective integration into the policy system, the potential tension between a top-down rather than a more bottom-up approach to defining well-being, and the need for greater work in relation to future capitals and managing potential policy trade-offs.

In terms of tailoring the OECD framework, gaps were identified, specifically culture, language and heritage; suggestions were made on criteria for selecting indicators and in relation to potential indicators to include (See Appendix B).



Reflecting the multi-dimensional nature of well-being, all 11 of the OECD dimensions were identified as being very important or important in the survey with a wider group of stakeholder organisations. Respondents were asked to rate the current OECD well-being indicators, from 'not at all important' to 'very important'. Figure 2.1 shows the breakdown of responses by percentage.

**Figure 2.1: Response breakdown**



The majority of respondents considered all eleven of the OECD indicators to be either 'important' or 'very important'. Health (92 per cent), Environment (77 per cent) and Housing (75 per cent) had the highest number of respondents consider them 'very important'. Income and Wealth emerges as the category which the smallest proportion of respondents consider 'very important'.

Irish culture, language and heritage was identified as a significant gap in the OECD 11 dimensions. Ireland's Gaeltacht communities and rich Irish language heritage may require a particular focus, similar to New Zealand's focus on the Māori culture and language. This echoes the inclusion of 'Values, culture and meaning' as one of six dimensions of well-being in Public Participation Network (PPN) well-being approach (SJI & Environment Pillar, 2019).

The need to include a measure of participation and access to culture, arts and creativity was the strongest theme in the response to the wider survey. Culture is mentioned 33 times, creativity 18 times and arts 13. Furthermore, the rights of Irish language speakers and the promotion of the language is an important theme emerging from the question.

While health is included in the OECD framework respondents, in the wider survey, provided more clarity on the aspects of health they would like to see measured, including the strength of the health system and equal access to services and waiting times. A strong message emerging was the need to ring fence mental health indicators and give them their own category. Access to healthy nutritious food and clean water was also highlighted.

Figure 2.2: Word cloud from the wider survey on gaps in the OECD Dimensions



Other issues which raised by significant numbers of respondents included:

- Gaps in the OECD approach in relation measuring social interactions and connections;
- Ability to partake in sport and leisure activities, time spent engaged in culture, art and creativity;
- Access across diverse thematic areas including measuring access to services and amenities, nature and education.
- Community, including services in communities, community engagement and the sustainability of communities.
- Governance related indicators and demand for more measures in relation to trust, accountability and transparency and government and politics.
- Environmental issues, in particular the protection of natural habitats and wildlife; meeting international commitments; and, using evidence based assessments to examine the current status.

The Consultation highlighted that the selection of indicators needs to balance the dual purpose indicators will play in a framework: be easily understood for communicating to external stakeholders and have the ability to drill down to provide a meaningful level of information on policy performance for internal stakeholders.

It also noted that administrative data sets include a lot of valuable data that could be drawn upon in addition to existing CSO sources. In particular, the consultation highlighted that the public service data catalogue,<sup>2</sup> which describes the data held by about 100 sector bodies, could be a valuable source for the well-being framework.

The consultation also noted the need for clear and transparent criteria for selecting indicators. Ultimately there will be no right or wrong indicators and no perfect set. What is important is to ensure that there is a cohesive overall set and to get consensus on them among both the external and the internal stakeholders.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://datacatalogue.gov.ie/>

In addition, the Consultation, through a survey of the members of the Stakeholder and Expert Group and bilateral meetings, identified a number of specific indicators. Appendix B provides further details. Three areas were highlighted as particularly important:

- **Self-efficacy and agency:** People’s ability to realise for themselves their rights and entitlements. It is related to people’s ability to participate, which requires the skills, self-efficacy or activation to be able to engage. Amartya Sen emphasized the importance of this sense of ‘agency’ as ‘*someone who acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives*’ (Sen, 1999: 19).
- **Loneliness:** This was seen as a particularly powerful ‘indicator of indicators’ under social connections, with particular importance for rural areas
- **Green space and access to nature:** There are important ‘positive’ indicators that are highly co-related to wellbeing (Alcock *et al.*, 2014; Faculty of Public Health, 2010). Positive measures such as access to green space/nature should be included alongside more ‘negative’ areas such as pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, in the wider survey, when asked about other indicators to include in a well-being framework, reference to ‘people’ appeared frequently with 97 mentions. This illustrates the importance of ensuring people are at the heart of the framework and the selected indicators.

## 2.3 Selecting and Enhancing the Indicators

The purpose of indicators within a well-being framework is to monitor progress towards the achievement of priority outcomes.

Through the work of the S&E Group five selection criteria which would shape the selection of indicators were agreed (Box 2.1). These which were shared with the IDWG and the CSO and have shaped the development of the dashboard.

### Box 2.1: Indicator Selection Criteria

- **Availability and quality:** Since the framework will have to operate over time, consistency is important to enable a valid time series to be established.
- **International comparability:** As far as possible, the indicators should have the ability to make inter and intra country comparisons providing a capability for **international comparison** over time.
- **Disaggregation:** The indicators should lend themselves to aggregation and disaggregation. Disaggregating to sub-populations is critical for highlighting the difference between the most advantaged and disadvantaged and to reaching the furthest behind first.<sup>3</sup> Data sources that are geo-coded would enable mining down to local levels and help to overcome the use of different regional categories by different agencies.
- **Balanced:** Not just considering the merit of each indicator alone, but rather looking at the overall set together to have the right mix to ensure a multi-dimensional understanding of well-being, including a mix of both subjective and objective indicators as well as a mix of both positive and negative indicators
- **Relevance:** They should be relevant to the Irish context and able to inform public policy and be linked to policy frameworks.

<sup>3</sup> The findings of the pilot survey with the stakeholder and expert working group pointed to the importance of ‘all’ population cohorts (age, gender, education, socio-economic group, region, ethnic group, income band, people with disabilities) across indicators under all dimensions. Where specific cohort groups were specified, the most commonly referenced groups (behind ‘all groups’), were: socio-economic, gender, age, ethnic group and region.

The CSO developed a demonstration dashboard to communicate how the first interactive dashboard will look and function, which the Stakeholder and Expert Group discussed during their fourth meeting on the 4th of June. The Stakeholder and Expert group welcomed the interactive nature of the planned dashboard, the ability to drill down into more detailed data and the user friendly infographics that were presented.

The demonstration dashboard prompted further discussion on how the dashboard might operate in future, and the group highlighted issues to consider for further work.

Firstly, in relation to indicators more broadly, children and youth are not well represented in current data sources, though there are wider sources, such as the WHO Health and Behaviour of School Age Children or the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment that could be drawn upon.<sup>4</sup> The Stakeholder and Expert group recommended the inclusion of data related to children and young people's well-being in the final indicator set selected.

Second, it was suggested that the dashboard of indicators should include both 'headline' indicators that support effective communication and high-level accountability as well as a wider set of 'diagnostic' indicators that enable drilling down to sufficient depth to support policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation.

Third, the demonstration dashboard was clearly targeted towards the general public with a focus on representing data on single indicators (with links through to the existing more technical database for expert policy users). The Stakeholder and Expert group reflected that there is a 'mid layer' audience of policy-literate stakeholders for whom the dashboard could be improved to enable a more sophisticated interface with the data, for example allowing two or more indicators to be selected together. An example was given of the Oireachtas Constituency Dashboards<sup>5</sup> that provide an interactive online visualisation of Census data for each of the Dáil constituencies as an example that facilitates a greater level of user interaction.

Fourth, the Stakeholder and Expert Group focused on the issue of trade-offs between different policy areas and whether there is potential for a dashboard to help make trade-offs more explicit.

The Stakeholder and Expert Group also noted that, while there are some data gaps (notably in the area of biodiversity), the challenge is not simply data availability, but rather linking data together usefully to understand and address the intersecting aspects of well-being. Current silos can result in disjointed or misaligned services, while a lack of a common national set of outcomes to work towards creates challenges and inefficiencies for service providers (such as Pobal, SOLAS, and Tusla).

## 2.4 Improving Measurement of Future Capital

The ability to address tension between current and future well-being is challenging.

The consultation and research highlighted some tensions, in particular between current economic growth and the environment.

For example, literature on 'De-growth' proposes an equitable downscaling of production and consumption (Kerschner, 2010: 544). Daly, a leading figure in ecological economics, argues that for many countries GDP growth has become 'uneconomic' because the costs of generating growth, including environmental damage and depletion of natural resources, exceed the additional benefit of higher GDP. In Daly's perspective there is a need to limit what he refers to as 'throughput', the use of energy and materials. If these are appropriately limited he is open to the possibility that 'development' can continue on the basis of qualitative improvements and greater efficiency (Daly, 2012). Models such as the 'doughnut' situate a social floor within planetary boundaries to identify the 'safe operating space' for human well-being (Raworth, 2017).

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/child-and-adolescent-health/health-behaviour-in-school-aged-children-hbsc/about-hbsc> and <https://www.oecd.org/PISA/>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/constituency-dashboards/>

Overall the OECD framework was considered not to be strong enough on the need to work within environmental limits. Natural Capital was identified in the consultation as a particularly important element of the framework. However, the OECD summary report approach which shows natural capital measures going up or going down may not be sufficient.

This area could be strengthened by moving beyond the current measure to include the economic impact of environmental losses. For example, Natural Capital Accounting can translate environmental stocks and flows into an economic measure to be able to account for trade-offs. Approaches that put an economic valuation on natural capital and ecosystem services are not universally endorsed (see for example, (Schroter et al., 2014), but have recently gained momentum as the UN Statistical Commission adopted a new framework—the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting—Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EA) in March 2021. This provides an internationally agreed approach to including the contribution of nature when measuring economic prosperity and human well-being.<sup>6</sup> Helm who is a leading proponent of the concept of natural capital accounting argues that the preservation of natural capital should be an urgent policy priority (Helm, 2015: 15).

A challenge for natural capital accounting in Ireland is that data is scattered across agencies, departments and individuals—it is not in an integrated system and the CSO are dealing mostly with national rather than disaggregated data. It is a relatively new area. The CSO published Ecosystem Accounts—Peatlands and Heathlands 2018 as a frontier publication to highlight this use of new methods.

There are also significant data gaps, in particular in relation to ecological stocks. There are also data gaps on pollinators, as these are not systematically monitored outside of protected areas. Introducing a monitoring scheme compatible with other EU member States could help address this gap.

Another avenue which was highlighted as having potential is a composite indicator, such as the National Welfare Index (NWI) which has been collected annually for nearly 10 years, (Waidelich *et al.*, 2017).

## 2.5 Establishing Processes for Stakeholder Engagement

The Consultation highlighted that developing a well-being framework with significant stakeholder engagement (internal and external experts, citizens) will require time and stakeholder mapping.

Multiple contributors to the consultation emphasised the need for adequate time for the process of developing the framework and engaging stakeholders meaningfully. The development of the framework will need to balance differing needs of different stakeholders—for example detailed data for policy and programmes but simple and clear messages for the purposes of public communication within one approach, which will require meaningful engagement of a wide range of stakeholders.

It was noted that a stakeholder mapping is important to help prevent the exclusion of stakeholders, to facilitate diversity and empowerment and to simulate the varied consultation requirements. Three sets of stakeholders who are critical to the success of the framework were identified: citizens, stakeholder organisations with relevant expertise or experience with population groups, and stakeholders within the policy system.

In addition, for well-being frameworks to resonate with the local community deliberative engagement with people is needed. Dialogue, debate and citizen engagement is a core part of the process. This will require a level of ‘reach’ and with a properly representative sample. Those for whom a well-being framework could have the most value in terms of outcomes, may be least likely to self-select to engage.

The consultation identified a number of design principles and these were shared with the IDWG. (Box 2.2).

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.un.org/en/desa/un-adopts-landmark-framework-integrate-natural-capital-economic-reporting>

### Box 2.2: Design Principles for Consultative Work on Well-Being

Work on well-being should reflect a number of design principles:

- **Deliberative:** Emphasise inclusion (representative of all of society), justification, and reflection (Dryzek, 2016).
- **Relevant and Adaptive:** Engage with stakeholders in specialists fields (such as psychology, economics, lifespan development science, sustainability and systems science) directly and early on those issues that are currently critical as well as over time to ensure that the framework is responsive to context and built upon and improved upon as we learn.
- **Diversity:** Focused on diverse views and lived experiences across sectors and wider society, in particular the most vulnerable groups in society. Diversity in this sense may be descriptive in terms of gender, age, educational attainment etc., but also should recognize the intersectionality of identity and inequality.
- **Transparency:** The approach should also be transparent, capable of tailoring questions for audiences, able to strike a balance between expert input and citizen or user input; combine a mix of objective and subjective data; and provide visibility for participations in relation to how their inputs have shaped the framework. It was also noted that the final selection of indicators should come after the finalisation of high level outcomes/goals in order to ensure optimum alignment.
- **Impact:** Embed the framework in practice to help bring about improved policy-making to deliver (measurable) outcomes that positively impact on well-being.

## 2.6 Conclusions

A well-being framework is an opportunity to outline an ambitious vision for Ireland based on the lived experience of Irish citizens and Irish values.

The OECD framework is a useful starting point. The consultation provided a basis to tailor the framework to ensure that it adequately captures the concerns of Irish citizens. It drew attention, in particular, to mental health, loneliness, positive measures of environment in particular access to green space and nature, and a core focus on 'self-actualisation' of citizens to enable participation.

Further work is needed to ensure the framework gives adequate weighting to the futures focus, in particular environmental sustainability and trade-offs.

Meaningful engagement involving discussion and deliberation is required in the further design of the framework and as a feature of how the wellbeing approach will be embedded in practice.

## Chapter 3

# Developing a Vision

## 3.1 Introduction

Central to the case for well-being framework is that it creates an opportunity to focus on developing and discussing an overarching vision.

The more consultative and participative route, which underpins the well-being work, builds upon the assumption that policy affects everyone and therefore everyone should have a say in how those policies are developed. The well-being work offers a basis to create processes of engagement to work on what is most valued by people across the whole island.

It is not a technical exercise but rather it is about identifying vision and overarching priorities 'this is what we value', phrased in aspirational language as statements of intent.

A clear message coming through from the bilateral meetings was an expectation (and in many cases an assumption) that a well-being framework for Ireland would include high level outcomes, goals or priorities that sit at a level above the OECD dimensions (and above the thematic focus of individual departments). International experience suggest that this element of a well-being framework is most commonly the focus of engaging the public, that is identifying what people's priorities are, rather than a more technical discussion of dimensions and indicators.

Such outcomes speak to both the needs of internal and external stakeholders. Internally, they could facilitate a shift towards outcomes based policy making, and in particular enabling multiple departments contribute to shared overarching objectives; they could facilitate a 'national performance framework' approach, with any programme designed by Departments or funding agencies or local authorities designed with reference to overarching outcomes (and indicators).

Externally, outcomes are simple, clear and future focused articulations of what the well-being framework is intended to achieve in practice. They can be easily understood by the general public and they can help to generate external buy-in by indicating the ambition intended for improving well-being and a sense of ownership.

This chapter outlines the results of a survey carried out with 539 organisations. Organisation groups were mapped by sector and population group to ensure a spread in the reach of the survey. The analysis below is based on the overall results Appendix B provides result summaries by group type. This shows a high degree of commonality between the groups, with some variation reflecting particular areas of interest.





Inclusion was also frequently used, 44 times in total. An important element of inclusion is integration and respect for migrants, including the right to work. Positive aging and the rights of older people was a frequently referenced issue for respondents, including making Ireland an attractive place to grow old in, access to services and dignity at end of life. Ensuring future generations are protected and children are valued and have a voice is also important to the respondents.

The preservation of the Irish language was also an important issue for the respondents, including access to services through Irish and ensuring the language is respected and preserved. Furthermore, the need to preserve and grow Irish culture, arts, creativity and heritage is also an important theme.

The issues of jobs was discussed frequently by respondents. The creation of jobs was an important issue, however it was also discussed more widely in different ways, including quality jobs, working conditions and adequate income. Work life balance is also a dominant theme, with respondents stating they would like more leisure time to spend with family and to cut back on commuting. Work-life-balance was specifically mentioned 20 times in question one.

Education was mentioned 30 times and spans from equal opportunities in education, to life-long learning and adult education to ensuring people have the necessary skills for the job market. A holistic approach to education was also discussed in a number of responses, including the need to embed well-being into education.

Respondents are keen to see an Ireland where citizens, irrespective of their background are respected and valued. Citizens want to live in a safe Ireland where they feel secure and happy; and can flourish.

*Tá mé ag iarraidh go mbeadh Éire ina tír inar féidir forbairt go hiomlán mar dhuine... Deis forbairt go hiomlán mar dhuine i bpobal atá measúil agus ag freastal ar riachtanais iomlán an duine.*

*(I would like Ireland to be a country where full development as a person is possible...The opportunity to develop fully as a person in a community that's respectful, and that meets all the needs of the individual.) (Survey respondent)*

### 3.3 What do people value and what makes a 'good life'

While the first question focused on people's vision for Ireland, question two invited people to reflect from a more personal perspective on what they value and on what is important for a 'good life'. Respondents were given ten boxes to fill in with free text. Figure 3.2 identifies the words and phrases that were used most frequently.

Figure 3.2: Word Cloud Most Frequently used Words and Phrases



Health was a top priority for respondents, it was mentioned a total of 379 times in all boxes. Health issues ranged from general health, to access to quality services and mental health. Education was also considered as a very important to respondents, and appeared 149 times, issues included equal access to education and lifelong learning.

Access as a theme emerged strongly throughout this question, 255 times in total. This is a very broad theme and encompasses a number of important areas, including access to essential services such as health and education, access to nature, access to public amenities and access to good quality food. The prevalence of this shows the importance respondents put on the ability to have access to what they consider essential to well-being. This is borne out in research which shows the challenges that exist, for example:

- Approximately 12 per cent of those referred to specialist child mental health services (CAMHS) in 2017 were waiting over 12 weeks to be seen, although the service is geared towards those with complex or severe mental health difficulties;(Ombudsman for Children's Office, 2018)

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- Over half of homeless families surveyed in Dublin in 2017 were homeless as a property was either not available or unaffordable; (Focus Ireland, 2019)

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- There is unmet need for childcare services and this is most commonly linked with these services being too expensive; the unmet need is correlated with material deprivation; (Grotti *et al.*, 2019) and,

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- There is unmet need for homecare and it is most often due to such services being unavailable or of insufficient quality (*ibid.*).

Social connections, including, friends, family and community was a very important theme emerging from question two. Respondents value time with loved ones and feeling part of a community. Ensuring communities have the required services and amenities was important for ensuring cohesion and Irish communities remain vibrant.

Jobs, work and adequate income is valued by respondents. Not only do respondents value having a secure job, but they want to work in a positive environment where their work is valued and gives them a sense of purpose. Furthermore, respondents want flexible work where they have a good work-life balance and flexible working.

Like question one, environmental issues emerged as important areas for respondents. As well as the bigger environmental issues, question two also focused more on personal wishes for the environment including access to clean air and water and the wish for a clean and healthy environment that can be enjoyed and accessed through leisure activities like hill walking and through amenities and green spaces.

The need for affordable and adequate housing also emerged from question two. Respondents would like to have a house that is safe and meets their needs.

Protection of the Irish language, our culture and the arts also emerged as being of value to the respondents of this question. Access should be equitable and inclusive. Respondents also value leisure time, inclusion in sports and having the time and ability to exercise.

Protection and support for all citizens, particularly the vulnerable was strongly features in the answers to this question. This support can be from connections or the State support. Respondents also value equality amongst people throughout society, including equitable access to services and state infrastructure.

Healthy, nutritious food was important to respondents, including the means to grow one's own food.

## 3.4 Conclusions

There is an appetite for a well-being framework amongst the respondents. The organisations surveyed as part of this consultation have provided strong ideas for what the framework should look like, what should be included in it and what is important to measure. All 11 dimensions in the OECD framework are considered important by the respondents and number of significant thematic areas have emerged from the data.

The survey provides valuable direction and the findings have shaped the draft framework. However, the survey is just a 'toe in the water exercise' that had significant limitations in reach, particularly to population groups, and was a limited means of engagement in terms of deliberation. The response to the survey suggests an appetite by citizens to engage in these conversations and a more meaningful and more representative process of engagement should tap into this energy and enable engagement.

## PART 2 Guidance for the Next Phase of Work on Well-Being

# Chapter 4



The development of Ireland’s well-being framework will be iterative. This section draws upon an initial review of Irish and international experience, as well as the input from stakeholders and experts during the consultation, to help guide the development of future phases of work in Ireland.

There are a range of well-being initiatives in Ireland. There are a diverse mix of approaches, ranging from snapshots of population-level well-being to initiatives focused on performance of specific outcomes-based policy frameworks.

The Irish examples considered included a number of national frameworks specifically focused on well-being and other work which has a less explicit approach to well-being. These examples were examined to provide an initial insight into different types of work in Ireland. There is scope for Ireland’s well-being framework to provide an overarching strategy or connecting framework within which these different types of approaches operate. However, as noted in the closing chapter/section this will require further research and work to identify the specific ways in which different types of work can be supported by the well-being framework.

The international examples of well-being frameworks are drawn from France, Italy, New Zealand, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the UK. Table 4.1 provides an overview of key elements.

Given the broad range of well-being initiatives globally, the international case studies were chosen based on the similarity of their well-being work to the starting point of the OECD framework—in each example they take a dashboard approach, understand well-being as a multi-dimensional concept, and include both objective and subjective measures of well-being indicators.

**Table 4.1: Key elements of selected International wellbeing frameworks**

Country	Framework elements
France	Dashboard of 10 indicators in the sub-set for annual reporting on inequalities, quality of life and sustainable development.
Italy	12 domains of well-being. Monitored by 130 indicators, including both objective and subjective measures, Published in an annual report by ISTAT. A sub-set of 12 indicators integrated into a report by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and submitted to Parliament at the beginning of the budget cycle.
New Zealand	12 Domains of current well-being in the Living Standards Framework. <sup>7</sup> Monitored by 43 indicators including both objective and subjective measures. 4 Capital stocks that support wellbeing now and in the future, and 22 indicators. 5 priorities identified in Budget 2019 based on well-being analysis Distribution across people, place and generations.
Northern Ireland	12 Outcomes identified in the 2016 Programme for Government. 49 Indicators in the Outcomes Delivery Plan, including both objective and subjective measures. <sup>8</sup>
United Kingdom	10 dimensions for Measuring National Well-being. Supported by 43 indicators, including both objective and subjective measures.
Scotland	5 strategic aims in the National Performance Framework. 11 national outcomes. 81 national indicators, including both objective and subjective measures.
Wales	7 goals in the Sustainable Development Framework 46 indicators

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/our-living-standards-framework>

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/indicators>

The remainder of this section focuses on guidance that this work provides for the development of Ireland's well-being framework. It is focused on the following issues:

- 4.1: Developing and Using High-level Priorities
- 4.2: Regular reporting and monitoring
- 4.3: Deeper and wider consultation
- 4.4: Linking Well-Being Into Policy Outcomes

## 4.1 Developing and Using High-level Priorities

High-level statements of ambition are a feature of many of the international well-being frameworks. They are called different things in different approaches—priorities, national outcomes or goals.

The Irish frameworks show a move in several policy areas to more over-arching policy frameworks that set high level outcomes, co-ordinate sectoral programmes, require collaboration between departments and agencies, and aim to reformulate delivery at local level. The frameworks typically contain an overarching, short, vision; with a range of outcomes, objectives, principles, or themes underlying them (the terminology varies).

High-level priorities highlight the various aspects of people's lived experience that matter to their wellbeing that are often downplayed in traditional analyses. They give prominence to the values within a well-being framework, such as the importance of how wellbeing outcomes are distributed between individuals or groups.

High-level priorities are aspirational in nature, for example 'We all enjoy long, healthy active lives' (Northern Ireland), 'We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment' (Scotland) or 'Reduce child poverty and improve child well-being including addressing family violence' (New Zealand).

In many examples (e.g. Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland's BOBF, Healthy Ireland and the SDGs) the high level outcomes, goals or priorities are a part of the framework itself, acting as priorities over the medium to long-term duration of the framework. In the New Zealand example they are separate from the framework itself, but are a core part of the policy-making and budgeting process: they were articulated as 5 Priorities in the Well-being Budget 2019, but do not appear within the Living Standards Framework itself.

High-level outcomes in a well-being framework are important for adopting a multi-dimensional approach and fostering collaboration across different departments, where a silo approach is frequently identified as hindering well-being. Well-being issues do not align neatly with government departments or single sectors, and shared higher level goals that different departments contribute to can begin to address this.

A number of Irish frameworks outline the rationale for their approach and for focusing on well-being in a multi-dimensional way in the first place. For example Healthy Ireland outlines how the key health challenge in Ireland now is chronic diseases, many of which are impacted by multiple policy areas. The rationales recognise that well-being is multi-dimensional and influenced by many policies and therefore requires collaboration between cross-sectoral policy makers and implementers. The well-being statements adopted by the PPNs show significant cross-over between domains, for example the Health (Physical and Mental) domain extended beyond the need for decent healthcare, incorporating the importance of the environment, infrastructure and social connection (SJI, 2020: 6).

A well-being framework can also be a catalyst for work in wider areas, with agencies, civil society or private sector initiatives contributing towards the shared vision. For example, a DCU and Inter-Church initiative is exploring the concept of 'social friendship' as an overall objective for well-being, referring both to an aspect of individual relationships



and a commitment to the well-being of the community and its infrastructure, and linking this work to specific dialogue and project on homelessness.<sup>9</sup>

## 4.2 Regular Reporting on Performance

A distinctive element of a well-being approach is measuring performance against a dashboard of priorities and indicators—to demonstrate and communicate the extent to which the government’s policy efforts and associated budgets are improving wellbeing in practice. At a more granular level, performance needs to be disaggregated and used to inform policy responses that attend to inadequate outcomes.

A suite of indicators, aligned to well-being priorities are the means of tracking and illustrating progress. Selecting the appropriate number and range of indicators is needed to support the dual aims of a well-being framework: a small enough number of ‘headline’ indicators that support effective communication and high-level accountability as well as a wider set of more finely-grained and disaggregated ‘diagnostic’ indicators that support more effective policy design, analysis, monitoring and evaluation.

The number and type of indicators used in the international case studies varied. A small set of indicators are used in budget analysis in Italy (12) and France (10), drawn from a much wider data-set for the purposes of reporting to parliament as part of budgetary discussions. New Zealand and the United Kingdom, use a wider variety of indicators. For example, in New Zealand 65 measures across current and future well-being, as well as disaggregated measures across population groups inform budget deliberations (Durand 2019: 144).

Findings from an OECD review suggest distinguishing between a wider set of ‘diagnostic’ indicators for detailed policy work and ‘headline’ indicators for broader communication.<sup>10</sup> The Public Policy Institute for Wales (PPIW) in Wales considered international evidence on designing well-being indicators and concluded there should be tiers of indicators with a small number of headline indicators underpinned by a second tier of 30-35 indicators, with an additional accompanying set measuring differences in outcomes (PPIW, 2015).

Irish frameworks also set initial indicators, but there are often commitments to develop a range of indicators for the framework, over time (e.g. Healthy Ireland and the Irish Better Outcomes Better Futures). The indicators chosen initially are typically ones which are regularly collected, available and internationally comparable. As many of the frameworks stress focusing on sub-groups (e.g. disadvantaged groups, local groups) many seek to develop disaggregated indicators to capture the experiences of these groups.

A common feature of the international well-being frameworks is the regular publication of performance reports that are critical for accountability. Some annually or biannually (France, Italy, New Zealand, UK), and within specific reporting periods (New Zealand, Wales, Scotland).

For many of the case studies, reports are focused on parliamentary processes for the purpose of shaping policy decisions and for parliamentary oversight and accountability. For example, in France and Italy annual reports on well-being indicators are submitted to parliament at the same time as the draft budget and are aimed at framing the budget discussion including evaluating impacts and shaping agenda setting; in Scotland scorecard reports were introduced to accompany the budget review process (every 2-3 years). Scorecards are produced for each committee in the Scottish Parliament to summarise progress on National Performance Framework indicators relevant to each committee.

Ireland reviews progress towards the SDGs in regular ‘Voluntary National Reviews’ to be presented to the United Nations High Level Political Forum. Ministerial responsibility and accountability for reporting is important to ensuring that the agenda is built in rather than bolted on (Trebeck & Baker, 2021). In a review of Irish initiatives, Ministerial responsibility was also highlighted as important in the review of Irish frameworks (Kaoukji & Little, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Communication with the newly established Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations at DCU

<sup>10</sup> Online seminar with OECD’s Centre on Well-Being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE) on the 8th April

### 4.3 Wider and Deeper Consultation

Public involvement—especially for groups at risk of marginalisation and people whose wellbeing needs particular attention—in developing well-being frameworks is important in its own right given the centrality of ‘agency’ to wellbeing. It is also critical to the legitimacy of the framework and developing buy-in. Ensuring on-going engagement in processes of implementation and review is important to the on-going legitimacy and to deliver on the transformative potential of a well-being approach.

In the international cases the consultation is often quite extensive. For example, in Canberra, a six phase process to develop indicators and embed into budgetary system lasted almost two year. This included an extensive eight-month process of community consultation capturing the feedback of 3,000 citizens on what is most important to them. There was also an iterative engagement with communities, academics, representative stakeholder organisations and government departments and agencies (ACT Government, 2020).

All of the Irish frameworks were developed using consultation, both with stakeholders and with beneficiaries, and a number include on-going stakeholder engagement. These consultations are an important resource. For example, a review of the thirteen Visions for Community Wellbeing highlights priorities for a national well-being framework. Areas of particular importance to these communities are: Sustainability; Inclusion and Diversity; Local Economies that support society; Civic Engagement; and Social Connectedness (SJI, 2020).

It is also important to note that different approaches to engagement are used at different phases of framework development. Across the Irish and the international frameworks reviewed, consultation involved a combination of both ‘expert’ led and citizen informed approaches, with most taking a multi-strand, multi-phased approach. In some cases (e.g. France, Scotland) the initiative began with little citizen engagement, but subsequent revisions engaged in more widespread consultation. In other cases (e.g. Wales, the UK) a large scale ‘National Conversation’ kick-started the process of debating what is important to identify priorities.

In many cases stakeholder advisory groups (France, Italy, New Zealand, Northern Ireland) or expert bodies (UK, Italy, Wales) produced draft dimensions or indicators, the results of which have been the subject of public consultation.

In most cases deliberative processes, including meetings, focus groups or workshops were included in addition to less discursive activities (surveys and written consultations). In some cases (France and Italy) representative samples of the population were engaged in the consultation process.

In a number of cases goals or dimensions were the initial focus of citizen engagement, focusing on priorities; with indicators having more of an expert focus. In Wales a major public dialogue on the ‘Wales We Want’ primarily fed into the selection of seven high level goals. The Public Policy Institute for Wales (PPIW) were tasked with an expert led approach to identifying indicators that were subsequently the focus of public consultation. In other cases, consultation has focused on the framework in its entirety, with stakeholders considering both the dimensions and the indicators as a whole package (for example New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland).

It is also evident in many examples that citizens, stakeholders and experts are engaged as on-going feature of a well-being approach. For example, in Northern Ireland and in Scotland there has been on-going public engagement with the framework as they evolve. In Northern Ireland the original outcomes were the basis of public consultation in 2016 and in 2021 there is public consultation to revise the indicator suite (together with learning from expert assessment). The emphasis is on refining rather than starting from scratch. The Scottish National Performance framework has been regularly reviewed since it was first published in 2007. This has been based on consultation with stakeholders in academia and civil society, and discussion with community groups and members of the public (OECD, 2018: 45).

In addition, stakeholder engagement sometimes goes beyond the framework itself, to engagement in policy and implementation. For example, in Scotland, the Community Empowerment Act (2015) that put the National Performance Framework into legislation, also included the allocation of 1 percent of local authority funding to be managed by

participatory budgeting that engages citizens in the identification of priorities for spending. This agreement was recently re-affirmed.<sup>11</sup>

There are also varying types of consultation evident in the Irish work. A number of frameworks established consultative committees of stakeholders to advise on long-term implementation (e.g. BOBF, Healthy Ireland). Another example is the Stakeholder Forum established to facilitate on-going monitoring, review and engagement by civil society, academics and business in the SDGs. Multi-stakeholder input is expected to form part of the regular Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) of Ireland's progress towards the SDGs. Ireland's 2018 VNR (Government of Ireland, 2018) included a compendium section on stakeholder inputs and a youth representative spoke as part of the official presentation of the VNR to the UN.

## 4.4 Linking Well-Being into Policy Outcomes

To capture the full potential benefit of a well-being approach it is evident that countries go beyond reporting on indicators. Well-being data and analysis is integrated into policy formulation, budgetary allocations and policy evaluation. Institutional or other arrangements, including alignment with local and global well-being policy frameworks, are used to embed well-being frameworks into policy making.

A key question is the degree to which a WB framework is something that will become meaningfully established, and in particular embedded into the policy system beyond the term of any one government. Drawing on national and international experience this section considers this question from a number of perspectives, including:

- Legislation;

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- New institutional structures;

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- New ways of working;

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- Budgets and Well-being; and,

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- Linking local and national.

### 4.4.1 Legislation

In many of the international case studies well-being frameworks were reflected in legislation to ensure continuity and accountability. Laws such as the Scottish Community Empowerment Act 2015, the French 2015-411 law, the Italian Budget Law 2016 and the New Zealand Public Finance (Wellbeing) Amendment Act 2020, place a duty on government to regularly report on a set of well-being indicators.

The lack of a legislative basis was pointed to a weakness in the case of Northern Ireland, where the articulation of the well-being outcomes in the Programme for Government during the three-year suspension of the Assembly and Executive created difficulties for the extent to which regional or local government were expected to embrace a different way of working (Carnegie Trust UK, 2020: 7).

### 4.4.2 New Institutional Structures

Many of the international examples created new institutional structures to support the integration of well-being approaches. For example, the Future Generations Commissioner in Wales, or the Technical Assessment Panel (Northern Ireland) and Technical Assessment Group (Scotland). Responsibilities for wellbeing are sometimes assigned to existing

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://pbscotland.scot/blog/2021/2/1/local-and-national-government-reaffirm-commitment-to-1-pb-target>

institutions, for example responsibilities are assigned to the Auditor General for Wales and to the Treasury and Minister of Finance in New Zealand.

Some of Irish frameworks established new structures (or leveraged existing structures) to enhance co-ordination. For example, Healthy Ireland included the establishment of a health and well-being directorate in the HSE to implement the plan. Previously, the National Children's Strategy set up the Office of the Minister for Children with a junior minister, to have adequate power to implement the NCS. It also established an oversight board of assistant secretaries of relevant departments.

Finally, a number of articles looking at the conditions in which Irish over-arching frameworks can be successful (Ó Riordáin & van Egeraat, 2016; Little, 2007; Kaoukji & Little, 2007) point to the need for buy-in of politicians, policy makers and professionals. They point to the incentive structure for these groups—the need for the policy framework to offer something useful to these groups. For example O'Riordan and Van Egeraat note that the National Spatial Strategy, which looked for more regionally aligned development, did not align with the incentives of either local or national politicians. .

#### 4.4.3 New Ways of Working

An ambitious approach to well-being means adopting an outcomes focus which will align the public sector (and wider stakeholder partnerships) around a common set of goals and priorities.

In the international examples, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and to some degree New Zealand have taken such an outcomes based approach. In Northern Ireland an 'Outcomes Delivery Plan' was developed to monitor progress towards the 12 outcomes. Shared outcomes to foster collaboration is also a feature in many of the Irish examples including BOBF and Healthy Ireland.

Research shows that a focus on outcomes facilitates a joined-up approach because it can involve working backwards from desired impacts to key drivers and contributory actions, rather than forwards from departmental silos (Carnegie UK Trust, 2015). In Scotland the National Performance Framework forms the basis of performance agreements with public service delivery bodies, and is used to monitor their effectiveness. Some departments have produced strategies that link their own actions to the Scottish NPF targets and outcomes, accompanied with concrete indicators of change, such as the 2017 Justice Department strategy 'Justice in Scotland: Vision and Priorities'.<sup>12</sup> In Northern Ireland the outcomes approach is embedded (if somewhat inconsistently) with some departments identifying one outcome, others multiple outcomes and others not referring to the outcomes approach at all (Carnegie Trust UK, 2020: 8).

Public servants across government will need support, guidelines, tools and training to take on board well-being priorities, to adopt new ways of working, to use new analytical processes and to align their activities with the wellbeing goals (Trebeck & Baker, 2021). For example, deeper integration of well-being in budget decision-making will require tools for assessing well-being impacts of proposals. This includes in particular methods of cost-benefit analysis (as developed for example in New Zealand and in the United Kingdom), as well as projections of different policy scenarios—which in Italy have so far only been applied to a limited set of indicators where the greatest knowledge currently exists (Durand 2019).

Many of these changes will need to be underpinned by cultural change. The reviews of Irish over-arching framework implementation point to the importance of cultural change and cultural understanding. For example, BOBF states that implementation will not happen without culture change and will require everyone to work and think differently. Langford (in Kaoukji & Little, 2007) noted that, in working with different departments in her role as Director of the Office of the Minister for Children, understanding the working culture of each organisation, and respecting it, was key. This however took a lot of time. Sustained championship and strong strategic push are necessary to drive attention, take-up and understanding of the importance of the agenda, and maintain commitment.

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<sup>12</sup> See: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/justice-scotland-vision-priorities/>

An inquiry undertaken by the Auditor of Wales (Public Accounts Committee, 2021) found that *‘insufficient efforts to build awareness and understanding and to ensure culture change to align with the principles of the Act’* contributed to a gap in implementation of the Future Generations Act.

#### 4.4.4 Budgets and Well-Being

The allocation of public spending, and ultimately the budget, is a major lever for achieving policy objectives. The budget process has therefore been targeted in many of the international case studies examined to broaden decision making beyond traditional economic measures.

This includes monitoring a dashboard of well-being indicators to frame, ex ante, the budget discussion. In Italy and France well-being reports are submitted to parliament as part of the budget process based upon a smaller number of indicators than the larger ‘diagnostic’ well-being data sets. In Scotland, Scorecards that give summaries of well-being data and trends have been accompanied by an additional report. This sets out the inter-relationship between the Government’s activities, spending plans and the key choices.

A more ambitious approach is to assess budget proposals for their expected impact on wellbeing, as part of the decision-making process typically coordinated by the Treasury or the Ministry of Finance. In the Italian Economic and Financial Document 2017, a subset of four wellbeing indicators were selected for deeper analysis, including an experimental forecasting exercise for the next 3 years, with a baseline (no new policy) scenario, contrasted against a predicted scenario of the aggregate impact of the new policy measures introduced in the budget on the key outcome indicators selected (Durand 2019).

New Zealand has integrated wellbeing into the policy making process by requiring well-being data and analysis to be used at each stage of the budget process including setting priorities, analysing proposals and making high-level trade-offs. Budget priorities were identified for the 2019 budget based upon the wellbeing analysis, and Government Ministers and departments were directed to focus their budget bids towards addressing these priorities. Any bids that are aligned with one or more of the five budget priorities and which demonstrate collaboration between departments are prioritised. Ministers were also asked to identify one per cent of their portfolio’s spending that is not aligned with wellbeing for ‘reprioritisation’. In the 2019 budget \$2bn was identified by Ministers and \$700m was actually reprioritised (Huang, 2020: 9-10).

In the Irish frameworks reviewed, budget alignment with the outcomes sought is rarer. Some funding is provided for new staff and structures to do the work—for example funding for co-ordinators of local youth partnerships, and for the Office of the Planning regulator. Some of the frameworks are aligned with national budget allocations, but many are not. For example, the Irish NPF, while not a well-being framework, does specifically links to the budgets under the National Development Plan, and links the NPF’s NSOs (national strategic outcomes) to the government’s ten national strategic investment priorities. It also provides a policy framework for accessing funds including the Project Ireland, the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund, Enterprise Funding Schemes, EU funds and the European Investment Bank (Van Egeraat, 2019).

However this strong alignment of funding and frameworks is not evident in all frameworks, although many refer to this issue and look for greater alignment. For example, BOBF states that ‘The Government recognises the need for alignment on funding priorities for children and young people’, and contains commitments to ‘explore the development of cross-Government estimates for expenditure on children and young people, and update these annually thereafter’, and to ‘use the intelligence from Children’s Services Committees in relation to local need and priorities to inform the allocation of national and local funding streams’.

#### 4.4.5 Linking Local and National

A well-being approach offers the potential for better alignment from local to national, fostering alignment and more efficient and potentially innovative engagement between local and national government.

Many of the international and Irish examples seek to enhance the national-local link, but it is a challenging area and that there is no jurisdiction where this is being done perfectly.

In Scotland the National Performance Framework is the basis of performance agreements with public service delivery bodies, and is used to monitor their effectiveness (OECD, 2018). Local-National coordination was sought through the 2008 agreement negotiated between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on the working and financial relationship between Central and Local government. Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) were produced by each local authority in 2008-9 as the basis of their relationship with the Scottish Government. They show how locally agreed outcomes contribute to the Scottish National outcomes and are required to be supported by robust performance management arrangements.

Several of the Irish frameworks referred to the need to strengthen local delivery. For example, Culture 2025 refers to 'strengthening the role of local government to deliver cultural services'. Healthy Ireland commits to 'draw up specific proposals in relation to the potential role of local authorities in the area of health and wellbeing'.

In many of the Irish frameworks, local policy needs to align with national guidelines, with varying degrees of adaptation to local areas or circumstances. For example Culture 2025 is quite fluid in how organisations under Creative Ireland link activities to the aims in Culture 2025. Meanwhile the Junior Cert Well Being curriculum requires schools to develop their own wellbeing programme, of 300 hours, and linking to six centrally defined well-being indicators. At the other extreme, the National Planning Framework uses legislation to mandate local and regional authorities to address a list of topics.

A common challenge is that the national level initiative tends to get superimposed on existing structures but at the same time other initiatives are not taken away—which results in multiple or overlapping initiatives. Enhancing vertical alignment requires engaging policy stakeholders and looking also at what to take away to create space for the new well-being approach.

Ireland has an opportunity to create strong alignment between national and local levels by ensuring that the development of the national well-being framework is cognizant of the well-being work done to date at the local level by Local Authorities and the PPN network in future steps of consultation. There is considerable similarity in the 11 OECD dimensions and the six PPN domains (See Appendix C).

Several countries (including Scotland, Iceland and Wales) have linked their measures of wellbeing to their commitment to the SDGs. The Irish frameworks also link to existing strategies and structures, including the SDGs although they vary in how they do this. In Ireland, many civil society organisations, academic organisations and business groups have engaged with the SDGs, including aligning strategic plans with one or more of the 17 Goals. In addition, an approved Dáil motion of July 2020 which sets out that each select Committee must address progress on implementation of the SDGs as part of its work programme.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2020-07-30/64/>

## 4.5 Conclusions

This section presented an initial review of experiences with international and Irish well-being frameworks and initiatives. It confirms that the focus on vision and articulating ambition in high-level goals in particular to foster cross departmental collaboration is critical. It highlights the importance of specific collaborative structures which will foster cross-departmental working and external engagement. In particular, the work in Ireland and internationally highlights the need for structures which map and regularly report on performance.

The research highlights the work involved in carrying out wider and deeper consultation. It also draws attention to the institutional structures arrangements that are used to embed well-being into policy making and implementation. These includes a national performance framework, integration of a well-being approach into the entire budget process (including participation in planning, development, implementation and evaluation).

The international and national research provided significant insights into the key question of how countries and initiatives link work on indicators to outcomes; and link national or overarching frameworks and local work. Further work, including in-depth research with policy-makers, which probes how these programmes work in practice would be useful in the further development of Irelands' well-being framework.

## PART 3 Next Phase in Developing Ireland's Well-Being Framework



## Chapter 5

### **Introduction**

The development of a well-being framework in Ireland is an explicit attempt to approach policy work and the setting of priorities in a fresh and innovative manner.

It aims to place a shared vision, priorities and agreed outcomes, and processes of ongoing consultation which shape each of them, at the centre of a more cross-cutting approach to policy. It involves the development of data linked to citizens 'lived experiences' as a means to gauge and review progress. It resonates strongly with the Council's long-standing view, of the need to attend carefully to the overarching system of priority setting and resource allocation.

This closing chapter focuses on steps that can be taken to capture the full potential for a well-being framework in Ireland. It identifies actions that can be taken to support the transformative impact of a well-being framework.

The Council recognise that the work on indicators and the development of a dashboard is an important first step. This chapter, in Section 5.1, reflects on the initial work on well-being indicators.

Section 5.2, argues that to fully capture the potential of work on well-being that future phases of work can be orientated towards an overall vision shaped by the three overarching and inter-linked priorities, which emerged strongly in the consultation: equity, agency and sustainability.

Section 5.3 sets out four lines of action which will support the next phases of Ireland work on developing its well-being framework:

- Understand how well-being frameworks support transformational change;

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- Foster deeper understanding of equity;

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- Develop enhanced processes and institutions to support agency; and,

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- Improve data and reporting on sustainability.

Section 5.4 concludes.

## 5.1 Reflecting on the journey to date

The report of the IDWG provides static dashboard which will be operationalised and go live on the CSO website in autumn 2021. This is an important first step in the development of Ireland's well-being framework.

During 2021 the initial work on Ireland's well-being framework has involved intensive consultation with NESC and wider stakeholders and experts. The deliberations, research work and survey work carried out by NESC has been shared with the IDWG on a regular basis. The work of the IDWG, and by extension the CSO, has been shaped in a number of ways, including:

- The focus on vision;

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- The importance of equity;

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- Selection criteria for indicators;

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- Defining dimensions and important indicators; and

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- Wider consultation.

The process itself, to date, has been hugely valuable. It has enabled a wide group of stakeholders and experts to shape and influence a potentially profoundly significant approach to policy and decision-making. The members of this group,

collectively or individually, and others identified during the research by NESC, constitutes a resource which should be used during subsequent phases of work on the development of Ireland's well-being framework.

In Ireland, significant work with Government departments, agencies and other organisations has been focused on outcomes and in some cases these are already linked to well-being frameworks. This report has shown how many of these organisational level well-being frameworks are linked, or could be linked, to the Government's forthcoming overarching Well-Being framework. Work at departmental level should continue to explore the synergies that exist and the opportunity for the well-being framework to provide an overarching framework that 'joins the dots' across existing initiatives.

The IDWG has discussed at early stages of this process that further phases in the development of a well-being framework for Ireland would ideally focus on utilising the framework in public policy—informing, designing, implementing, examining and evaluating policies and programmes (IDWG, 2021). The Council endorses this focus.

The work outlined below identifies ways in which the Council believe it can support and complement this work.

## 5.2 Three Overarching and Inter-linked Priorities: Equity, Agency & Sustainability

The consultation revealed three overarching and inter-linked priorities: equity, agency or voice and sustainability. These can help direct future work on the development of well-being. This section briefly describes each of these priorities.

In answer to the question *'I want an Ireland where...'* equality was raised most frequently and it crossed a number of dimensions including equal opportunities, income, distribution of wealth, fairness, access to services and equality amongst different groups in society (equality of conditions). The eradication of poverty was important for respondents. Measures suggested to address poverty include effective support structures in place for people experiencing poverty and basic income for all. Respondents also suggested including disaggregated poverty indicators.

However, the concern with equity would seem to be broad and reflective of a desire to ensure that a 'spirit of equity' or 'social friendship' was more evident in Ireland. Survey respondents frequently linked equality with ensuring societal wellbeing: a fair and equitable society is needed to ensure citizens' wellbeing and to enable the taking of collective decisions in the common interest.

The need for robust indicators relating to equality was also emphasised by respondents, including measuring the equality of access to services, amenities, and opportunities.

This concern with equity reflects characteristics of the Irish economy, including:

- the high degree of market income inequality, which is the gap between cohorts before incomes are adjusted by tax and welfare payments. Market income inequality in Ireland is among the highest in the EU, although reduced to close to the EU average for disposable incomes, through tax and transfers;
- the poverty rate of a number of groups, in particular those reliant on welfare payments, with the at-risk-of-poverty rates highest among those with a disability, the unemployed and lone parents;
- wealth inequality, which is twice the rate of income inequality, and with home ownership a key contributor to wealth; and
- unequal access to affordable reliable services.

The second key concern of the stakeholder and expert group throughout the consultation was a focus on well-being outcomes and the meaningful engagement of citizens in identifying those priorities.

The consultation and research—in Ireland and internationally—illustrated that well-being is complex, multi-faceted and both personal and societal, and is therefore best understood through deliberative and deep dialogue with citizens. Well-being frameworks that do not sufficiently engage with citizens risk becoming a technocratic exercise with limited public buy-in and limited capacity to create social capital.

The initial review of international experience also highlighted the importance of civil society engagement, with all countries engaging in a multi-step approach to stakeholder and citizen engagement.

Securing citizen buy-in, and indeed ownership of a well-being framework, was identified as important for ensuring relevance, gaining traction, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the a wellbeing approach where political leadership may otherwise ebb and flow.

It is clear from the consultation that citizens need to feel that their needs and views are taken seriously in the setting of priorities and development of policy. There is a strong desire for sense of agency but this emerges alongside a concern with equity and sustainability. This strongly suggests that the demand for agency comes with a sense of responsibility towards our shared society, that it is not simply an expression of the desire to be heard and to have personal needs fulfilled.

Improved sustainability was the third key priority which emerged in the consultation, both among members of the stakeholder and expert group and the wider survey. The consultation revealed that a 'futures perspective' which balances current well-being with long-term sustainability is a relatively weak area in the OECD framework. Key concerns related to identifying and resolving potential trade-offs between dimensions, in particular short-term economic wellbeing (according to some measures) and environmental sustainability.

These priorities cannot and should not be viewed in isolation. The demand to see a spirit of equity is deeply linked to people feeling they need to be heard: not being heard contributes to a sense of inequity and lack of solidarity. Equity is linked to current and future generations and therefore deeply connected to ensuring that we live within planetary and natural boundaries. The sense that people now feel that their concerns about the climate and nature are heard intertwines sustainability and agency.

## 5.3 Using the Well-Being Framework to Bring About Transformation

The Council believes that these three inter-linked priorities—equity, agency and sustainability—should guide the future development of Ireland's well-being framework. It suggests four lines of action which will help bring about this focus.

### 5.3.1 Understand How Well-Being Frameworks Support Transformational Change

A recurring theme during the consultation was impact: how will the well-being framework actually change outcomes.

The work for this report has not revealed strong evidence to date that links well-being to outcomes. Indeed, the research suggests that in many respects there may be greater insights to be gleaned from Irish work, in areas such as children and health. It would be useful to examine in more depth how selected sectoral programmes in Ireland successfully linked indicators to outcomes and resource allocation decisions.

In addition, it is important to consider how other countries are in a general sense addressing wider citizens' concerns around these three priorities. It would be useful to examine a small number of countries including Nordic countries and those pioneering the use of well-being, in particular, New Zealand. We should remain in touch with developments in the European Union. The purpose of this research would be to deepen our understanding of the ways in which these countries are developing an improved shared citizen sense of equity, agency and sustainability.

The research would look in detail at the process by which New Zealand developed policy and funding proposals, focused on children's mental health, which formed part of its well-being budget. This work would also examine the role of national performance framework and oversight, reporting and monitoring systems.

It is proposed that this work would be undertaken by the Council beginning in the later part of 2021. Consideration might be given to exploring how our Embassy could support work which would help identify on promising budgetary and administrative practices in selected countries and on relevant on-going developments in the European Union and multilateral organisations. It would be worthwhile to explore the degree to which other countries link well-being frameworks to constitutional protections, the UN sustainable development goals, climate targets, and international human rights commitments.

### 5.3.2 Foster a Deeper Understanding of Equity

The promise of a well-being framework is that work on improving overarching priorities, such as equity would consider how equity is reflected in, and impacted, by inputs and actions in all 11 domains.

Addressing equity in well-being outcomes requires a new approach that recognizes the multiple and intersecting nature of well-being and supports required for well-being outcomes.

It requires adequate investment in the infrastructure of society understood in a broad sense. A clear historical example is the impact on health and wellbeing of municipalities' investment in water supply and sewage disposal from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A current example is the COVID vaccination programme.

Addressing inequality also requires a mix of income measures: adequate social welfare payments; supports to enable the transition from welfare to work; and access to decent jobs with acceptable rates of pay. Taxation and tax expenditures also have a fundamental bearing on inequality.

Provision of access to quality human services and amenities (such as green spaces) tailored and targeted to the needs of all individuals is essential to achieving improvements in equity (NESC, 2005, 2020a, 2020b). The concern with access to services, for example in health and education, was stressed during the Consultation, as outlined in Chapter 3. Tailored universalism, meaning that, as far as possible, providers embrace the challenge of adjusting their services to accommodate a more diverse public with different requirements, was and is seen by the Council as critical to the realisation of equal opportunity (NESC, 2005:203; (NESC, 2009).

The concern with access to services is not a 'residual'—that is only concerned with the needs of the most disadvantaged but a universal issue concerned with addressing the structural flaws that compromise any overall vision shaped by equity, agency and sustainability.

It is also suggested that, in the longer run, addressing inequality may require the government to consider the pattern of its own policies and the signal that is sent to society regarding the respective roles of the state, the market, and civil society in using the new well-being framework to transform people's lived experience. There are many ways—procurement, investment, tax, regulation, employee and business supports, education, etc—in which the approach taken by the state has a profound impact on societal relationships and a spirit of equity among citizens.

It is proposed that NESC would consider how its work could support a deeper understanding of the factors that foster a 'spirit of equity' in Ireland. It would focus on how specific cohorts that consistently experience disadvantage and how to break the pattern of continuing and inter-generational inequity.

This work would draw on the work proposed in Section 5.3.1 and NESC previous work in this area including its work on welfare, standards and human services and jobless households (NESC, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2020b).

A key focus in this work would be to identify implications and lessons for the ongoing development of Ireland's well-being framework.

### 5.3.3 Develop Processes and Institutions to Support Agency

The review of international experience identified citizen engagement as a common approach, and one that—critically—went further than traditional consultation exercises by opening spaces for a dialogue with citizens.

A second phase of consultation on a well-being framework in Ireland should build upon the draft framework by hosting a ‘Public Conversation’ involving a multi-step consultation involving different modes of engagement tailored to the needs of different stakeholders. The Council believe that this needs to be led by the Department of An Taoiseach and the IDWG. The Council and the Secretariat and members of the Stakeholder and Expert Group should be seen as a resource which can support aspects of this work. The Council highlights that deliberative and intensive approaches to engagement will require sufficient funding and expertise including in the areas of: identifying a more representative sample of Irish society and using appropriate methods to reach out to and enable the participation ‘harder to reach/easier to ignore’ groups who are most at risk of being left behind.

Consultation should include more deliberative approaches to engaging with experts, stakeholders and citizens focusing on discussion, debate and the exploration of issues in depth. A range of methodologies exist, such as Warfield’s method,<sup>14</sup> which can be used to support participative processes. In addition, innovative online survey tools such as the ‘your priorities’ website,<sup>15</sup> online submissions, consultative workshops or forums,<sup>16</sup> the use Delphi panels and action research, particularly peer to peer, and deliberative processes such as Citizens’ Juries.

Consideration should be given to methods that enable different groups to participate effectively and creating multiple opportunities to engage stakeholders in different ways tailored to their needs, for example, potentially linked in a sequence with the results of one element shaping the next. For example the Belgian G1000 ‘platform for democratic innovation’ approach involved large-scale consultation of the population through a website to crowd source ideas, followed by a citizen summit of 704 citizens to work through three big themes, with the results feeding into smaller citizens panel of 32 citizens to develop detailed recommendations.<sup>17</sup>

For Ireland this could involve a widespread online ‘public conversation’ to crowdsource priorities and respond to the draft framework, a series of in person workshops, potentially leveraging the PPN network and other stakeholders, culminating in a National well-being dialogue or Citizens Assembly approach refining the framework, discussing trade-offs and exploring implementation.

Future work on consultation should draw more upon the expertise and potential of the PPNs, drawing on their existing well-being experience (there is an existing bank of well-being vision statements framed around 6 domains), as well as the network that has reach to a wide range of stakeholder groups.

Future work may also benefit from engaging the good will of churches and religious communities across the island in implementing the well-being framework. Through the Irish Inter-Church Meeting and the Dublin City Inter-Faith Forum these communities are already conducting their own research (facilitated by academics) on the economics of well-being and belonging and have indicated to NESC their willingness to become involved.

Engaging children and youth is vital for a well-being framework that aims to have a futures focus. The next phase of consultation should give consideration to including involving youth organisations, for example Comhairle na nÓg and/or Dáil na nÓg in a youth citizen assembly or national assembly on well-being.

<sup>14</sup> Warfield’s method involves idea generation (e.g., focused on projects), voting (e.g., to prioritise options), and can also include scenario-based design work (e.g., to identify and synthesise specific requirements for project implementation). A combination of survey, round-table, and design thinking sessions can be used. See e.g. Hogan, M. et. al. (2015)

<sup>15</sup> For example an online crowd sourcing platform such as ‘Your Priorities’ (see: [www.yrpri.org](http://www.yrpri.org)), developed by the Citizens Foundation has been used in Iceland, Scotland, Estonia and other countries to invite the public to suggest ideas, outline the ‘pros and cons’ of the ideas presented, and to rank them.

<sup>16</sup> For example deliberative futures workshops which blend information, visioning and implementation and drawing upon a range of interactive participatory tools, see for example the UCC Imagining2050 project, see: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/eri/news/citizen-engagement-for-deliberative-futures-.html>

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.g1000.org/en/>

A key concern raised by the Stakeholder and Expert Group is clarity about the ‘ownership of ambition’. Well-being frameworks should include processes by which stakeholders and/or citizens are also involved in reviewing progress.

In this context, the Council recommends that as further consideration is given to the institutional features of the well-being framework that the role of the National Economic Dialogue (NED) is reviewed. The NED is part of the budgetary process which is intended as an opportunity to consider how to available resources can be optimised in the interests of all citizens.<sup>18</sup> Ensuring that well-being priorities that reflect lived experience are reflected in budgetary decisions was an important reflection from the consultation and literature review. Widening the focus of the National Economic Dialogue to become a National Economic and Well-Being Dialogue could further enhance the shift to embedding a well-being approach in practice. It would help foster a more holistic approach in the process of stakeholder engagement which is shaping budget discussions.

Finally, also in the context of developing institutional processes to support the well-being framework, consideration should be given to establishing a Standing advisory Group on Well-Being Measurement and Monitoring. The NESC consultation identified expertise that can be drawn up on during the next phase in the development and implementation of a well-being framework for Ireland, including in the areas of deliberative engagement processes and co-design and specific areas of well-being across sectoral areas and population groups. A standing advisory group could provide on-going support to the final design, refinement and implementation of the well-being framework.

#### 5.3.4 Improve Data and Reporting on Sustainability

A ‘futures focus’, in particular the importance of environmental sustainability to current and future generations was a key concern throughout the consultation, and ranked second in the assessment of the OECD dimensions after health.

Natural Capital or Ecosystem Accounting was identified as a relatively new area that has potential to feature within a well-being framework in order to more systematically incorporate issues related to the contribution of ecosystems and their services to the economy and social wellbeing, how the condition and integrity of ecosystems and biodiversity is changing over time and what estimates of a nation’s wealth and economic potential look like once the state of its environment is considered. The UN has recently adopted a common accounting standard—the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting, the CSO has published one frontier report focusing on an ecosystems accounting approach to peatlands and heathlands (CSO, 2021), and the EPA-funded INCASE project<sup>19</sup> has been piloting the development of natural capital accounts for different sites in Ireland. The CSO frontier report concluded that there is a ‘clear need for a national map of ecosystem extent and condition’, and the consultation identified adequate data on biodiversity outside of protected areas and better data on the condition of ecosystems as key gaps to be addressed. These data gaps should be prioritised. Further work already planned by NESC for delivery in 2022, will seek to provide advice on natural capital (nature) accounting frameworks. This work could draw on the INCASE and CSO work to explore the integration of ecosystem accounting into the well-being framework to deepen the futures focus on sustainability.

It is also worth giving further consideration to the development of a composite indicator (such as the NWI) within the well-being framework, particularly as a means of enhancing the futures focus of the framework. Work by Department of Finance, while noting the advantages of single figure. However, it has also raised concerns about a composite indicator. These included the loss of detail, the possibility that trade-offs and complementarity can be obscured; and, the challenges in developing agreed weighting within any composite indicator.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/05a724-national-economic-dialogue-2019/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.incaseproject.com/>

## 5.4 Conclusions

The development of a well-being framework for Ireland has begun in earnest. A set of indicators modelled on the OECD work and modified to reflect particular Irish circumstances and views experts and stakeholders has been identified. An interactive dashboard will be developed. Extensive consultation has taken place to support this through NESC and with wider stakeholders.

*Tus maith laith na hoibre.* The Council and the wider members of the Stakeholder and Expert Group strongly support this and in this report highlight how this good start can now be built upon.

In doing so the report argues for continuing involvement by NESC, and members of the Stakeholder Group in the development of Ireland's well-being framework.



# Appendix

## Appendix A:

### Background to the Work and Membership of the NESC Stakeholder & Expert Group

**Table A1: NESC Stakeholder and Expert Group on Well Being**

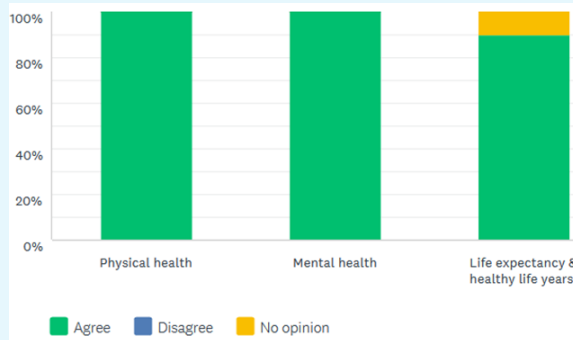
Organisation	Name
NESC	Larry O'Connell (Chair)
<b>Pillars</b>	
Business, Chambers Ireland	Emma Kerins
Trade Union, Forasa	Dessie Robinson
Environment, Feasta	Seán Ó Conláin
Community & Voluntary, Social Justice Ireland	Sean Healy (Colette Bennett–alternate)
Farming, Macra na Feirme	Denis Duggan
<b>NESC Independent Members</b>	
DCU	Professor Edgar Morgenroth
Formerly Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	Professor Sinead O'Flanagan
Formerly D/Taoiseach	Philp Hamell
TUDublin	Professor Paul Donnelly
Queens University	Professor Geriant Ellis
<b>External Experts</b>	
NUI Galway	Professor Micheal Hogan
London School of Economics	Professor Liam Delaney
UCC	Professor Clodagh Harris
NUI Maynooth	Professor John Sweeney
Pobal	Martin Quigley
UCD	Associate Professor Jennifer Symonds
<b>Departmental WG Group</b>	
D/Taoiseach	Emily Whelton
NESC	Helen Johnston
<b>Secretariat to the Group</b>	
	Niamh Garvey
	Anne-Marie McGauran

# Appendix B: Additional survey findings

**Table B1: Suggested Indicators from the Stakeholder and Expert Group pilot survey**

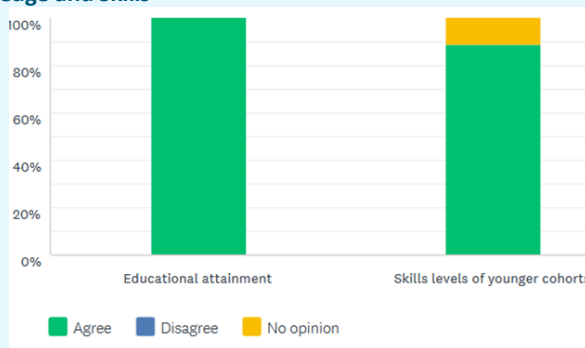
Dimension	Consider including indicator on
<p><b>Income and Wealth</b></p> 	<p>Gini index—distribution of wealth                      Consistent Poverty                      The difference between disposable income and making ends meet/financial security</p>
<p><b>Housing</b></p> 	<p>Reduction of homelessness                      Security of tenure for tenants                      Infrastructure rather than local services</p>
<p><b>Work and Job Quality</b></p> 	<p>Underemployment (insufficient hours to maintain quality life)                      Median income rather than quantity of work                      Unpaid work: volunteers, carers                      Young people not in education, employment, or training</p>

### Health



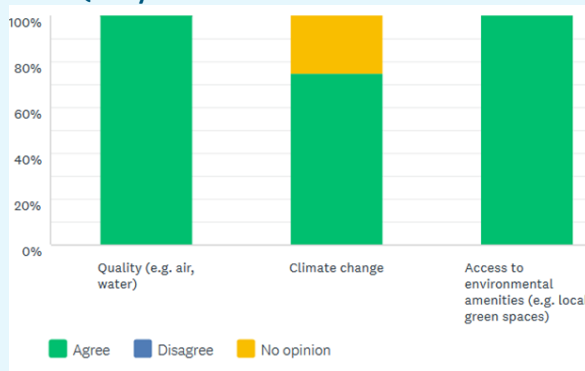
Access to universal healthcare, services  
 Deficiencies: waiting lists, lack of community healthcare, private hospitals and nursing homes  
 Include subjective measures  
 Disaggregation particularly important

### Knowledge and Skills



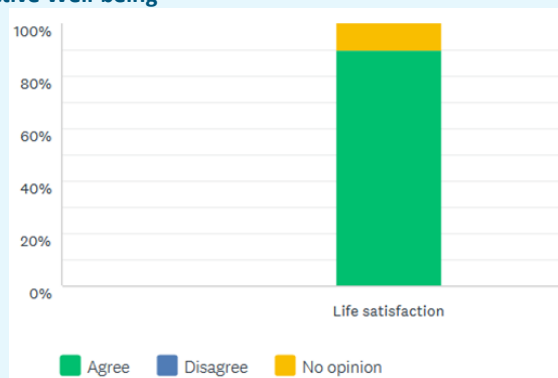
Adaptability of skill sets  
 Education skill levels across age cohorts  
 School readiness for children

### Environment Quality



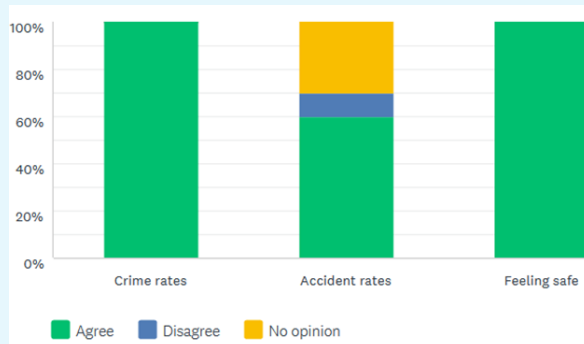
Fossil fuel/renewable use  
 Transition metrics, changes in practices  
 Biodiversity, especially pollinators outside protected areas  
 Climate mitigation costs  
 Neighborhood measures: littering, dereliction, crime etc.  
 'Climate change engagement'

### Subjective Well-being



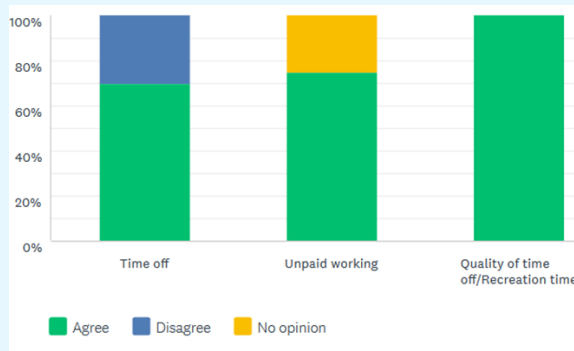
Self-efficacy/Agency/Locus of control  
 Self-Contentedness/Happiness

### Safety



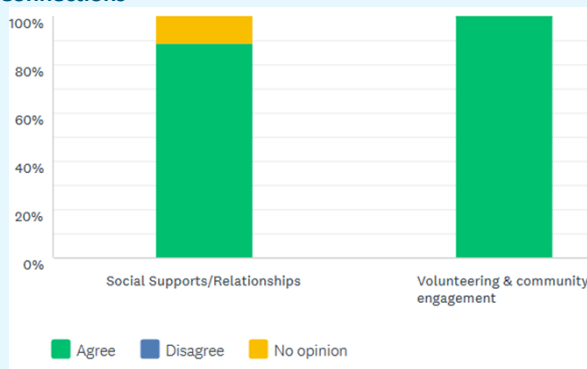
A measure of domestic violence  
Specifically violent crime  
Subjective measures  
Protection of human rights/free from discrimination  
Disaggregation particularly important

### Work Life Balance



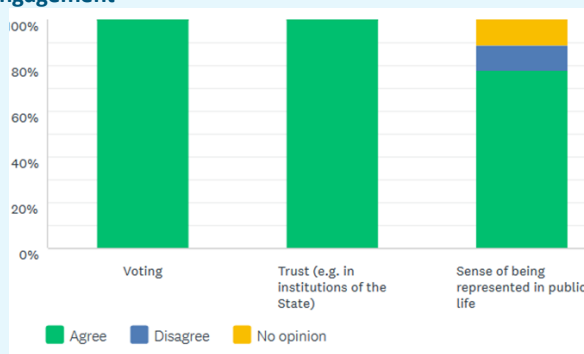
Subjective measures: e.g. 'enough time with family and friends'  
Right to 'turn off'  
Query on whether unpaid work is measure of work life balance

### Social Connections



Loneliness

### Civic Engagement



Registered to vote  
Participating in public life/being politically engaged/Volunteering  
Empowered local communities/decisions made locally  
Services to minorities  
Irish language services





**Table B3: Survey responses to the question ‘What I value most in life’ by group type**

**Social:**



**Economic:**



**Democratic:**



**Environment:**



**Population Groups:**



**No category given:**







## Appendix C:

# OECD dimensions mapped against the ppns, sdgs and government strategy statement goals

The Public Participation Networks were established in 2014, and were tasked with ‘going through a process to set out what they consider necessary to promote well-being for present and future generations’ to develop a ‘Wellbeing Statement’. The purpose of this ‘Wellbeing Statement’ was to ‘act as a guiding vision statement for everything done by the group that drew up the statement e.g. choosing representatives, taking positions on issues, developing activities of any kind.’<sup>20</sup> A review by Social Justice Ireland (2020) of the vision statements from 13 of the 31 PPNs who have completed them, highlights the following key themes across the 6 Domains of well-being that were developed as the basis of well-being statements:

- **Health (Physical and Mental):** In addition to the physical infrastructure that supports good mental and physical health, is the recognition of the need for understanding for people experiencing mental health issues and for a community-based approach to supports for vulnerable people generally. Cork City, Fingal, Longford, Monaghan, Tipperary and Wexford PPNs also make specific reference to the importance of the built environment and infrastructure generally to the health of the individual.

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- **Economy and Resources:** Sustainability and local jobs, decent training and the support of society/citizens are key themes that emerge under this domain throughout the 13 PPNs. A local economy that supported entrepreneurs and indigenous enterprises also featured for many.

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- **Social and Community Development:** This domain spanned a very broad range of areas for the communities in which the 13 PPNs are situated. Cultural diversity and infrastructure featured in the Visions of Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Longford, Monaghan, Roscommon, Tipperary, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow PPNs as important to Social and Community Development. The importance of acknowledging and valuing contributions from community members was also referenced in several Visions.

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- **Participation, Democracy and Good Governance:** Deliberative democracy—where communities had a say in the decisions that affect them—was a theme across all 13 Visions. Accountability and transparency across governance structures with an openness to engage featured in many Visions, as did the importance of capacity building opportunities to allow people from within communities to be proactive.

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- **Values Culture and Meaning:** The diversity of the counties’ citizenry and the support for expressions of cultural identity and inclusion was very evident across all the Visions of all 13 PPNs. The protection of built heritage sites was also included, and spaces to hold cultural events were included in most.

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- **Environment and Sustainability:** Sustainability, biodiversity and the natural environment featured in all 13 Visions. Within this context, some PPNs also included specific aspects of environmental protection. Clare PPN also included small holding and farm to fork production and use; Cork City PPN promoted safety and the development of sites as cultural and recreational amenities; affordability of amenities featured for Fingal PPN; and waste management was a feature for Monaghan PPN.

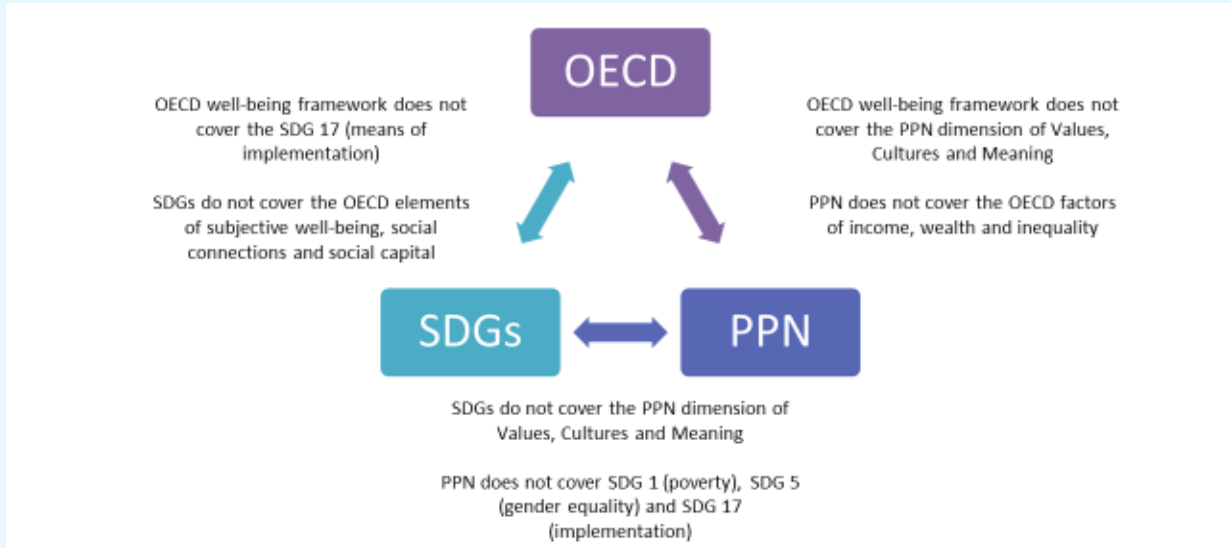
<sup>20</sup> Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2014): Circular Letter CVSP1/2014: Local Government Reform/Citizen engagement Guidelines Roll-out of PPN Structures with immediate effect in four Local Authority Areas, Laois, Tipperary, Galway County and South Dublin and subsequent roll-out across all Local Authority areas.

Table C1: mapping the OECD Dimensions with the PPNs, SDGs and Government Department Goals (as articulated in Strategy Statements)

OECD Dimensions	PPN Domains	SDG Goals	Government Departmental Goals*
<b>Current well-being</b>	Income & Wealth	SDG 1 (poverty); SDG 2 (food)	Distribution of income (DoF)
	Work and Job Quality	PPN 2; PPN 5	Promote better pay and conditions (DoEnterprise)
	Housing		Sustainable and good quality housing (DoHousing)
	Health	PPN 1	Fair and equal access to healthcare (DoH); Manage COVID , engage with public, integrate community care, access to healthcare (DoH)
	Work-life balance	PPN 5	Promote gender equality in the workplace (DoEnterprise); Right to disconnect (DoEnterprise)
	Knowledge & skills	PPN 4	Collaborate with educational institutions to identify talent, innovate, include additional needs (DoFurtherEd)
	Civic engagement	PPN 4	Promote and enable democratic local government (DoHousing); Public engagement (DoTrans)
	Environmental quality	PPN 6	Support Met Eireann as Ireland's authoritative voice on climate (DoHousing); Promote and safeguard public, plant and animal welfare for production (DoAgriculture)
	Safety	PPN 3	Defence policy (DoDef); Sound Public Finances (DoF), tackle crime (DoJust); Serve people at home and abroad (DoFA); Safety, Security & Accessibility (DoTrans)
<b>Inequality</b>	[captured throughout all dimensions]	SDG 1 (poverty); SDG 5 (women); SDG 10 (inequality)	Promote gender equality (DoEnterprise), domestic violence (DoJust); A fair immigration system (DoJust);

<b>Resources for future well-being</b>	Natural capital	PPN 6	SDG 13 (climate); SDG 14 (oceans); SDG 15 (biodiversity); SDG 12 (sustainable production)	Become a Circular Economy; net zero emissions future (DoECC); tackle Climate Action (DoT & DoTrans); One Welfare Framework: encompass animal welfare, human wellbeing and their physical environment; optimum policy framework for a sustainable agri-sector (DoAg); Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025 (DoFA); ensure building and planning contributes to a sustainable development (DoH); Protect the natural and built archaeological heritage and our biodiversity for its intrinsic value but also for regional employment and development (DoH)
	Economic capital	PPN 2; PPN 6	SDG 7 (energy); SDG 8 (work & economy); SDG 9 (infrastructure); SDG 12 (sustainable production)	Income and market supports for rural economy and environment (DoAg); Promoting environmentally sustainable economic progress (DoF) economically growth driven (DoAg); advance the green transition in enterprise (DETE); economic recovery from Brexit and COVID19 (DETE) tackle COVID19, Brexit (DoT); connectivity and effective regulation (DoTrans); Advance the economic and social development of rural areas, including the offshore islands (DoAg)
	Human capital	PPN 1; PPN 4	SDG 3 (health); SDG 4 (education)	Help vulnerable groups such as children and young people to overcome adverse circumstances and achieve full potential (DoChild); Equity of opportunity in education (DoEd), Community health integration (DoH); Form a respectful society based on experiences of past generations and aiding survivors (DoChild); Lead worldwide in research and higher education and support progression to further education; develop talents, promote innovation, support inclusion through good quality governance (DoFE)
	Social capital	PPN 3; PPN 4	SDG 16 (institutions)	Foster and maintain a high performance culture; Support empowered, inclusive and resilient communities and a thriving volunteer culture (DoRCD); Increased better relations between North and South (DoFA); Enable the community, voluntary, charity, philanthropic and social economy sectors to contribute fully to civil society (DRCD)

Figure C2: OECD, SDGs and PPNs compared



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An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Eacnamaíoch agus Shóisialta  
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